

**Working with Young People in the UK:
Considerations of Race, Religion and
Globalisation**

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Abstract

This thesis overall is concerned with three cardinal considerations in relation to working with young people in a modern and fundamentally demographically changed Britain. These themes include considerations of how young people's racial/ethnic origins and religious identity continue to shape how mainstream services interact with them as well as understanding how an increasingly globalised world changes how young people from Britain see or are seen in a new way at the personal, local, national and global levels. This thesis argues that the majority of these considerations are not currently well understood; hence the need for practitioners in youth and community development to gain cultural competency and global literacy.

It has been evidenced that Black young people continue to be disadvantaged in education, employment, criminal justice and a host of other socialisation spaces in comparison to the rest of society. In addition, the furore raised constantly and continuously in relation to the vulnerability of young Muslims to violent extremism deserves more critical attention. Furthermore, globalisation means that the world is much closer economically, politically, environmentally, technologically and culturally and there is increasing consciousness about the repercussions of these connections at the personal, local, national and global levels. However, questions remain as to whether practitioners who work with young people have the required competency to work across these racial, religious and global considerations. This thesis, consisting of the author's published works and this overview explores these three cardinal considerations of race, religion and globalisation when working with young people in a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-faith modern Britain.

The thesis comprises an exploration of working with Black young people within a historical and social policy context, as well as presenting research that explores the views of young Black children and parents. The author's key contributions consist of explaining how cultural relativism and dogmatism, as extreme positions, are constructed, with potentially fatal consequences. The second dimension of working with young people in Britain explored in this thesis is that arena of Global Youth Work within both a theoretical and practice setting, especially in relation to the training of practitioners. This section also reports on research in relation to how Global Youth Work is conceptualised and operationalised in British Higher Education Institutions delivering youth work training. The last section of the thesis focuses on the contemporary issue of working with young Muslims. Against a backdrop of the government's policy context of the "Prevent" agenda, perceptions of barriers young Muslims face in accessing mainstream services are explored, as well as the wider implications of fostering a culturally and religiously competent way of working with young Muslims.

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Section 2 - The Published Works

- a.** Young and Muslim in Britain: how responsive are mainstream services?
- b.** Conceptual and Pedagogical Approaches to the Global Dimension of Youth Work in British Higher Education Institutions
- c.** Black Young People in the UK: Charting the Tensions of Relativism and Dogmatism in Praxis
- d.** Barriers Facing Young Muslims in Accessing Mainstream Provision in Leicester.
- e** Racism and Young People in the UK

The following books are presented separately

f. Howson, C. & Sallah, M. (eds.) (2009) *Europe's Established and Emerging Immigrant Communities: Assimilation, Multiculturalism or Integration?* Stoke on Trent: Trentham. ISBN 978-1-905541-14-0

h. Sallah, M. & Howson, C. (eds.) (2007) *Working with Black Young People*. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. ISBN 978-1-85856-466-1

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To my mum and dad who taught me that I am capable of defining my destiny no matter what anyone else says. To Kodou, Abdoulie and Sulayman for their support and understanding.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

This thesis focuses on a number of crucial contemporary issues that affect work with young people in the UK, namely considerations of ‘race’, religion and globalisation. The thesis is based on a presentation of published works coupled with this critical commentary on the published works. This chapter includes a list of the published works (presented in full in section 2 of the thesis and including two published books) and a summary outline of the basic themes of each published work presented.

In this chapter, I set out to achieve three key things. First, I will attempt to bring together the thread of “Othering” that underpins all three parts of my thesis: race, religion and globalisation in relation to working with young people. Second, I will explore the key methodological, philosophical and pedagogical concepts that have influenced the works presented in this thesis; principally Freire’s (1972) pedagogy of hope and the power of transformative education for liberation; Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Whyte 1991; Baum et al. 2006; Chambers 2007) as a key empowering methodological tool to work with oppressed communities that has informed most of my research; and the concept of cultural affinity (Oakley 1981) later developed as experiential affinity (Boushel 2000) that has informed my work as a Black man, a Muslim and a witness to the excesses of capitalist globalisation, in researching with these communities. I will also use the sociological theory of intersectionality to illustrate the complexities of these various constructed identities in

interplay. Lastly, this chapter will present the published works and the context in which they were written.

It is cardinal that I set out from the beginning the thread running through my thesis. To answer this succinctly, I would say that the thesis centres on constructed notions of difference and the informal practice of youth work. Thompson (2003) construes oppression and discrimination as being operated at the personal, cultural and structural levels. Althusser (1971) presents his thesis of the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses. The former, he argues functions through violence like the police, the administration and the army. The latter, his thesis holds, is soft-core and functions through ideology and effected through media and religious outlets for example. His premise is that reality and its enactment can be enforced both through the violence of the state, even if this “violence” of the state takes non-physical forms such as the role of the administration; and the ideological apparatuses which are less visible and implicitly more difficult to pinpoint.

These ideological state apparatuses can be manifested in a number of ways ranging from personal beliefs to embedded ideologies within state and increasingly significant, global structures. Within a quite different research tradition, Berger and Luckmann (1967) write on the construction of social reality, suggesting that the development of human meaning-making is based on our experiences, how the world is socially constructed and how we interact with it. Within these conceptual constructs, there is an implicit and explicit construction of normality, difference and the “Other” (Said 1998). Everything that resides within the cultural and structural is conceived of as normal, and everything outside the boundary is conceived of as abnormal and different; a process of “Othering” (Sallah 2009b). This paradigm might be construed as dichotomous between one extreme of a continuum and another. However, the paradigm of “Othering” is more adequately conceptualised as one that is contingent and fluid, and dependent on the numerous variables at play: race, class, gender, nationality, ideology, sexuality and sexual orientation amongst others. The writing of this thesis concerns itself with how youth workers work with young people in informal spaces and through the distinct practice of youth work, to work through processes of “othering”, more specifically in relation to race, religion and globalisation.

Intersectionality: class, power, gender and ideology

Deciphering the impact of oppression, discrimination and disadvantage and locating it within the complex matrix of our praxis requires us to understand not only their nature but more so their interconnectedness in affecting the lives of young people who are “Othered” by a range of variables. Perhaps a paradigmatic temptation a great many researchers succumb to is looking at constructed identities singularly: race, class, gender, sexuality or other social categorisations. Whilst this allows us to understand how certain identities impact some people’s experiences, for example Black young people or young Muslims, it does not necessarily cater for the complex interplay of these constructed identities. Intersectionality, as a sociological theory and with its origins in the feminist movement, helps explore this interplay of a range of constructed variables, and this has greatly influenced my work around young Black people, young Muslims and the impact of globalisation and changing identities.

What is Intersectionality?

McCall (2005: 1774) recognised the genesis of intersectionality as a critique of race and gender based discourses that failed to take into consideration the “neglected points of intersection”. Lykke’s (2003) position on intersectionality theory holds that the competing dimensions of difference do not operate in isolation but are inextricably interconnected. Debrow (2008: 85) further argues that “intersectionality theory focuses on the effect of categorical intersection above and beyond the effects of its components”. Crenshaw (1994: 93), as a key exponent of this theory, argues that there is often a conflation of intra group differences: “ In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class” . She goes on to state that these experiences, of both being a woman and a person of colour are often covered in either antiracist or feminist discourses; their intersectional identity as both simultaneously are often missed out:

“Feminist efforts to politicise experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicise experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices” (Crenshaw, 1994:93).

She used “intersectionality to describe the location of women of colour both within overlapping systems of subordination and at the margins of feminism and anti-racism”.

Crenshaw (1994: 95) postulates two types of intersectionality: structural and political intersectionality: structural explores how ideology, class, gender and racial positioning influence people's interaction with mainstream services and how their life chances are affected as a consequence. "...once in a lower economic class, race and gender structures continue to shape the particular ways that women of color experience poverty, relative to other groups". On the other hand political intersectionality explores the domain of the sometimes conflicting political agendas of antiracism and feminism. As McCall (2005: 1773) argues: "Social life is considered too irreducibly complex – overflowing with multiple and fluid determinations of both subjects and structures – to make fixed categories anything but simplifying social fictions that produce inequalities in the process of producing differences".

In my work, I have had encounters where young people are engaged by youth workers through the lens of a singular identity such as Black young people, as young Muslims and as global citizens. However the intersectionality of all these variables remains missing from a wide range of theoretical postulations and practical interventions. Intersectionality as a theoretical paradigm sheds light on the complexity and inextricability of these dimensions of difference. I will give two examples to illustrate this point:

In a research project exploring the needs of African Heritage Muslims in Leicester (Sallah 2011b), I was astounded by the complexity of intersecting variables. The commissioners of the research were very clear in constructing this community as one with a single identity but my encounters revealed a more complicated picture where their ethnicity as African Heritage sets them apart from other South Asian origin Muslims; and additionally from other members of the public, including non Muslim African Heritage people. However their identity as Muslims was also very strong in that they belong to the Islamic Ummah; the universal Muslim nation of oneness. Another caveat to be added is that of immigrant status where some are British nationals and about half are not British nationals, having ongoing affiliations with countries in Africa and the Caribbean. Again this has been further broken down to those who reverted to Islam and those who were born Muslims. Some of the African Heritage Muslims spoke of being spat at, of having bananas placed next to them and of people making monkey noises near them (clear derogatory racist behaviours) whilst giving *darwa* (engaging the general public to accept Islam) and for example a man walking in town with his wife

(wearing a hijab) being confronted and asked whether he thought he was in Kandahar (a clear reference to the strict rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan and an inference to Muslim women being oppressed). Perhaps an analysis offered following the research I conducted around the needs of African Heritage Muslims best captures this perspective:

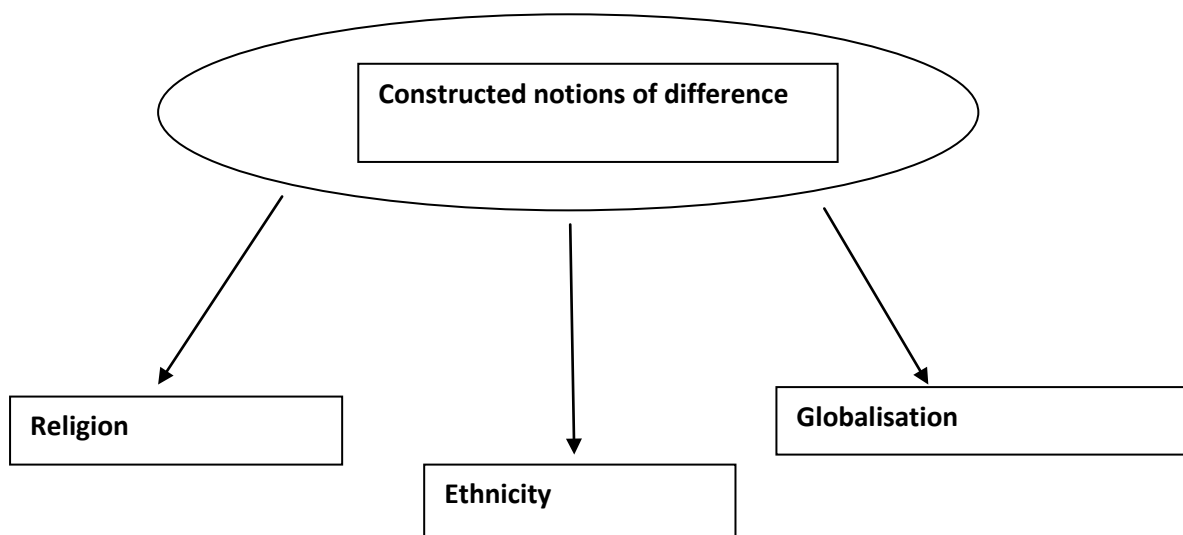
“... a young Muslim woman is affected because they are Muslim, because they are young, because they are Black and because they are also female and all of these constructions do not operate in isolation; their coming together means that their location both within the African heritage community and the Muslim communities in constant interaction exposes tensions. This scenario can be further complicated by adding other variables like immigration status and nationality. This intersectionality is manifested in some instances, in stereotypes of African Heritage people being used as a lens through which to judge African Heritage Muslims; even though a Muslim identity might be the most important identity for some African Heritage Muslims.” (Sallah, 2011b:21)

The second case involved young Black people in Bedford I interviewed (Howson and Sallah 2010) as part of research to explore issues that are of most concern to Black young people in the East of England. In their elaborations, their constructed ethnicity as Black young people was as important as their social positioning in terms of class as well as their immigration status as most of them were first and second generation immigrants (some of British nationality) and this raised fundamental issues of belonging. Added to this complexity is the issue of gender, gendered positioning and patriarchy. For example, some young people gave accounts of the education of girls not being supported in some families as much as those of boys and some boys gave accounts of being perceived by those in authority as aggressive which ultimately affects their life chances. This is another dimension that shapes the identities of some of these girls as well as some of the boys. In this research, we concluded that it:

“...brought into clear focus many of the difficulties that one encounters when seeking to work within a structure of oppression. Many of the young people who participated in the focus groups were able to identify specific ways in which they had been discriminated against; others were not confident about what they experienced, they rather sought to explore all other possibilities before concluding that their interactions or how they were treated was related to their perceived or projected identity (ethnicity, gender, faith or social class). (Howson and Sallah 2010: 20-21).

Focusing on race, religion and globalisation

Although constructed notions of difference can include class, power, gender and ideology, this thesis focuses on race/ethnicity, religion and globalisation as these have been the focus of my work over the past ten years. This overview will though remain cognisant of these aforementioned variables. I do not in any way dismiss or devalue the potential for a range of variables, or a combination of variables for that matter, to impact upon and affect the lives of the young people we work with, and indeed this list is itself far from exhaustive. Furthermore the concern of my research programme has not been simply an academic analysis of these three constructed notions of difference. Rather it has been an exploration of how these three dimensions construct and impact on the lives of young people specifically, and what implications this has for the education needed for those who are to work in professional roles in informal education with young people.



The distinct practice of youth work

How do practitioners grapple with these issues; not only in all aspects of work with young people, but more especially in the distinct practice of youth work? Youth work can be postulated as a distinct way of working with young people where youth workers are “seeing and responding to them simply as young people, as untouched as possible by pre-set labels” (Davies 2005:18). Whilst there are many spaces in which work with young people takes place, for example when teachers encounter young people as students or when Youth

Offending practitioners engage young people as young offenders; the process of youth work is different from these encounters. First, encounters between youth workers and young people remain largely voluntary, take part in informal spaces and start from young people's territories literally and metaphorically (Young 1999; Davies 2005). Second, the agenda for youth work, whilst sometimes negotiated, is largely determined by young people themselves and based on their every day realities, rooted in locality, their networks and experiential learning (Kolb 1984; Jeffs and Smith 2002; Davies 2005; Davies 2010). Consequently, youth work is about supporting young people to deconstruct their taken-for-granted reality, the way in which they have previously viewed and interacted with the world. Youth work then seeks to support them to develop new ways of looking and interacting with the world, especially in instances where established realities have either been oppressive to the young people concerned, or where the young people may themselves be unwitting beneficiaries of the oppressive structures of society. This distinct method of working with young people:

“...provides space for association, activity, dialogue and action. And it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood. In today's Europe, it is guided and governed by principles of participation and empowerment, values of human rights and democracy, and anti-discrimination and tolerance” (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, 2010: 2).

It is necessary to be transparent at this point that there are many who do not subscribe to the “purist” notion of youth work. Wylie (2010) highlights the various responses to what he describes as “youth work in a cold climate”: the romantics, he argues are those who hang on to the notions of good old fashion youth work; the technocrats are those who hinge their practice on managerialism and the dictates of targets and accreditation with scant regard for youth work process whilst the principled pragmatists, and Wylie considers himself one, believe that the process of youth work must evolve to survive in a presently cold climate. These three different positions aptly capture the debate raging in the youth work field in relation to the future direction of travel for youth work. These different positions also highlight the complexities involved in presenting the distinct practice of youth work in a dynamic environment. However despite the varied positions, most social commentators agree (Wylie 2010; Davies 2010) agree on the fundamental principles of youth work; mainly experiential and informal learning premised on a negotiated agenda with young people.

Youth work, therefore, is more than just education about the workings of oppression. The traditional didactic relationship between teacher and pupil can itself be seen as both an

outcome and a sustainer of particular constructed ideas of difference. If youth work is not to mirror such processes, the education it proposes must be a very different type of process, underpinned by very different types of values. The ideas for this process and for these values are contained in the work of Paulo Freire.

The influence of Freire

Freire (1972, 1974, 1985, and 1995) has influenced my work through his education for liberation and his belief in the transformative power of education to bring about social change. The most fascinating aspect of my encounter with Freire's work has been his ability to identify the key processes that, subsequent to his work, have come to inform what it is we do as community educators and youth work practitioners. His assertion is that all education is political, implicitly or explicitly as well as that education can serve to liberate or domesticate. Domestification, he argues, is rooted in the banking concept of education where the student is the bank and the teacher deposits knowledge during lessons and retrieves the knowledge during exams. Freire sees this as a dysfunctional approach that serves only to reproduce and replicate the very structures that oppress, as the education is then not rooted in the reality of the oppressed. In contrast, Freire advocates for education rooted in the pedagogy of liberation; a transformative education that is rooted in the reality of the students which is geared towards enabling the students to gain critical consciousness in order to name and transform their world. Although some have argued (Smith 2002; Taylor 1993) that Freire's approach to education, whilst radical, was often positioned as either/or (black or white), ignoring the many possibilities in between and that the educational encounters he explores remain largely formal. Regardless of this criticism, his incisive perception of the power of transformative education remains illuminative and resonates with my practice and values. It has greatly influenced my thinking and my contribution has been to use transformative education to attempt to get youth workers to deconstruct their reality and effectively change their practice as a means of bringing about social change in the particular areas this thesis seeks to address. My approach to working with constructed notions of difference: race, ethnicity and religion has been to work with practitioners to first, deconstruct their reality by

rooting their intervention in their learning, and then to work with them to transform their practice on their new found reality.

The work of Freire is based on the notion that the message of education is as much in the process of how education is conducted as much as the content, and his work centres on equalizing the relationship between educators and their communities so that education becomes a mutual process which he calls dialogical: education with people, not education of people, it follows that those researching the best ways to conduct informal education with oppressed groups need to pay attention to researching with, not research on communities. The emphasis on researching with is a feature of Participatory Action Research, a discussion of which follows.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

In this section, I will argue that traditional means of conducting research has the potential to reproduce oppression and that my research projects have largely been informed by PAR because of its ability, as a process, to be organic, to capture the oppressed community's reality and transform it, without seeking to be detached and removed from the realities of those being researched. Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers 1983), Participatory Action and Learning (Jayakaran 1996) and Participatory Action Research (Whyte 1991; Baum et al. 2006; Chambers 2007) whilst applied in different contexts; share principles and in this section, I will be using the term Participatory Action Research (PAR) to refer to all three.

“PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. At its heart is collective, self reflective enquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves...” (Baum et al. 2006:854)

Whyte (1991: 20) argues that this approach is different from the “conventional model of pure research” where the researched are treated as passive subjects and subjected to the “elitist model” and where the researcher is the expert and knows it all. Baum et al. (2006: 854) continue to argue that a defining feature of PAR is the blurring of the line between the two until the “the researched become the researchers”. This approach differs from what they call old paradigm or positivist science which postulates a single reality objectively and independently measurable by scientists, and where variables can be controlled and

manipulated to determine causal connections. They counter this with new paradigm science, encompassing PAR, “where the observer has an impact on the phenomena being observed and brings to their enquiry a set of values that would exert influence in the study”. This perspective advocates for the negation of the “Mathematisation” of the world where research focuses on only the things “that could be measured, counted and quantified (where) the scientific world is an abstraction from the lived world, or the world we experience” (Baum et al., 2006: 856).

The symbiotic relationship between research and lived reality and its liberatory synergised process attracts me, given the communities that I have been working with over the past ten years. To understand the context in which I work with difference, it is important to paint it against the background of the concept of community. The word “community” has been used so variably that it has now become almost impossible to attach a precise meaning to it. It does, however, provide us with a conceptual framework to understand oppression in relation to race, religion and global forces. Clark (1996) argues that community must have significance, security and solidarity for its members, whilst Smith (1994) emphasises the need for locality. Wenger (1998) articulates a community of practice which is based on a joint enterprise, shared repertoire and mutual engagement. These conceptual frameworks allow us to construct communities around domains of geography, identity and interest even though some of these domains may be imagined. Thus we can conceive of communities of interest and identity in addition to traditional notions of geographical communities, the basis of whose common bond is their experience of one or more types of oppression. These communities that are constructed because of shared bonds, e.g. around race or religion can in themselves be oppressed communities because of their “otherness”. Furthermore there can also be oppression within oppressed communities. This fundamental realisation has given me the opportunity to reflect on the role practitioners can potentially play in both dismantling oppressive structures and discrimination, or to implicitly and explicitly prop up an oppressive status quo. In this light, I intend to share some of my recent research projects to illustrate how PAR has influenced my thinking and practice:

Black children: boundary between abuse and discipline - This research project involved parents and young Black people in exploring rewards and sanctions in Black households.

This was my first major research project. I conducted focus groups and individual interviews with Black parents and young people, which allowed parents and young people to frame their responses within their own world of experiences. I also included the use of icebreakers with the young people to break the formality of the occasion. Nevertheless, I was myself only at the beginning of a learning curve on how to involve people in the design and delivery of the project, and their only involvement was limited to the piloting of the research instruments and designing the questions. One of the reasons for this, upon reflection is that it was part of an assessed academic piece of work and had to meet fixed and rigid institutional criteria and timescales that did not cater for the PAR approach. Additionally my theoretical development had not evolved at that stage (2002) to understand and appreciate the transformative power of PAR.

Barriers Young Muslims Faced in Leicester - The project involved over 500 young Muslims, six focus groups with young Muslims and a focus group with parents as well as individual interviews with key representatives of voluntary and statutory organisations in Leicester. The defining feature of this research was that from the onset I worked with seven members of the community to be researched, including one as a co-researcher, and together we negotiated the research objectives, the methodology, analysis, writing up and dissemination. Even though I had my own agenda from the onset which was to fulfil the contractual obligation between myself and the research commissioners, I had to constantly negotiate and renegotiate with the researchers to reach consensus and there were times when the young people acting as co-researchers rejected my view in favour of their own for example the format of the focus groups and the venue the questionnaires were distributed at. The balance of power was genuinely tipped in their favour and they knew their patch better than I did; where to find young people and which methodologies they would respond to. I respected and worked with this model of Participatory Action Research.

The State of Global Youth Work in HEIs - In relation to this project, again I worked with six students who were part of the team from the conceptualisation of the research project to its publication; negotiating the objectives, collecting the data and analysing it. I recruited interested students from the 3rd year Youth and Community programme who had already undertaken the Global Youth Work component of the relevant module, and explained the

funding I had received and the remit of the research to broadly explore the state of Global Youth Work in HEIs. Consequently research objectives were negotiated and the design of the methodology was also a joint enterprise between me and them. In addition, the operationalisation of the methodology was carried out by all of us as a team and the decisions we took collectively were subjected to a democratic process. Additionally the decision to use Surveyshare as a tool of analysis was jointly taken and even though I took a lead in the writing up, the students had opportunities to input their ideas at various stages of the process. The funding I received made it possible to remunerate the students but the process was an empowering one for them insofar as they told me so; it was also an empowering one for me as it rewarded my faith in people. The state of Global Youth Work in British HEIs; how it is taught and conceptualised was of paramount importance to them and I engineered a process which allowed them to generate new knowledge in a participatory way and which also allowed them to claim ownership of the process.

Tackling Inequalities in the East of England: Voices of Black young People - This project was carried out in the East of England, specifically in Bedford, Cambridge and Peterborough in 2009 - 2010, exploring perceived barriers to inequality young Black people faced. The following quotation explains the methodological approach in relation to PAR:

Based on the exploratory nature of the consultation, a range of qualitative techniques were employed to capture Black young people's perceived barriers to equality. We took two major considerations in facilitating this consultation process; that according to Freire (1972), the oppressed must be able to name their world before they can change it and it was important that we found conducive avenues for young people to tell their stories without us as consultants diluting their messages or imposing pre-set agendas. This is why we have engaged a more organic approach which started where young people were at, literary from their territory (Davies 2005). This meant that instead of going in with pre-set questionnaires, we created opportunities to hear Black young people's stories in their own words. ... On this basis, the methodological approach we employed is a mixed qualitative approach which incorporates focus groups, group work, role plays, presentations and games to gather young people's perceptions of inequalities. Central to this approach is our strong roots in informal education where we encourage participants to name their world from their own reality based on reflection and experiential learning in a non-formal way. (Howson and Sallah 2010:6)

African Heritage Muslims in Leicester - This project, conducted in 2010, explored the issues that are of importance to African Heritage Muslims in Leicester. Again in line with my

philosophical approach to PAR, I employed five community researchers from the African Heritage Muslim community in Leicester and we literally started from scratch in looking at relevant literature, designing the research instruments and collecting and analysing the data together. This research has been the most participative of my research projects so far. I placed adverts in community avenues and had six expressions of interest and was able to recruit five of them. I then facilitated a number of training days on literature review, research methodology, analysis and overall operationalisation. This training was preceded by teambuilding exercises and started with what the community researchers knew and where they were at and then moved to supporting them to consider the importance of literature review and the importance of mapping out relevant literature. We also collectively worked on the research technique, data collection and analysis as well as being involved in the drafting of the report and presentation of findings

My role in all of these research projects has been to recognise my expertise as well as the expertise of the members of the communities I am researching and facilitate the capturing of their views. It allowed me access and insight into the communities I researched which would not have been possible before. Seeing the transformation of my co-researchers from not being sure and immersed in “false consciousness” to gaining critical consciousness after our encounter was priceless. At the beginning, they were not sure and were immersed in the didactic relationship which constructs the researched and them as devalued people of no knowledge. This shifted, through a process, where they gained in confidence and came to believe in their ability to contribute valid knowledge and transform oppressive structures.

This brief review of PAR has shown how the community members, constructed as passive respondents in traditional research designs, can become active research participants. But with this breaking down of barriers between researcher and researched comes a related question of reconfiguring the researcher from detached, objective, neutral and separate to being engaged and aligned with the concerns of the community of interest with whom the researcher is researching. This brings us to the question of affinity between the researcher and the community of interest, and requires critical reflection on the social identities and values of the researcher.

Cultural affinity/Experiential affinity

A significant consideration that has influenced my research and writing is the concept of *cultural affinity* (Oakley 1981) or *experiential affinity* as expanded by Boushel (2000: 36). Oakley argues that the traditional paradigm of social science research emphasises the detached approach of the researcher as a “mechanical instrument of data collection” where “Both interviewer and interviewee are ... depersonalised participants in the research process” (Oakley, 1981: 37). Such an approach, she goes on to argue, espouses the paradigm of the ‘proper’ interview which “appeals to such values as objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and ‘science’ as an important cultural activity which takes priority over people’s more individualised concerns” (Oakley, 1981: 38). This traditional approach would not allow her to answer the many questions participants in her research project were asking her. She highlighted having to ask the participants for a lot of their time and asking them very intrusive questions as part of the research. From the traditional approach to social science research, she was not supposed to even give them a simple answer to their question. Not only as a medical doctor, but also as a woman who had herself gone through childbirth (the subject of her study). She understood what they were about to go through and was happy to answer questions participants had honestly, and in the process dismantled the hierarchical relationship traditionally upheld between researcher and researched as much as possible, and even helped out in housework where this affected the interviewee’s schedule. She found this approach of gender affinity with the researched very rewarding and concluded that the personal involvement of the researcher in the struggles of the researched “is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives” (Oakley, 1981: 58).

Boushel (2000) recognised the concerns others have about this approach especially given its potential to promote “essentialist assumptions” and “cultural insiderism” where a number of fixed variables are used in constructing the reality of a given group (Humphries and Truman 1994; Gilroy 1990, cited in Boushel 2000:76). She argues that this partial overlap between perspective and experience that can exist between the researcher and the researched can be conceptualised and labelled as “experiential affinity” (Boushel 2000: 76) whilst those of advantaged groups researching advantaged groups might best be conceptualised as “experiential interdependence”

This approach to cultural affinity/experiential affinity, whilst mindful of its limitations, has been a pivotal component of my research and writing over the past 10 years. Having had the

experiences of a Black young man, as a young Muslim, as a witness to the excesses of globalisation; I understand and share some of the researched's pains and frustrations; I also encounter a rigid academic approach to research which is also very disempowering based on ideologically dominant configurations of reality; supported by a dogmatic approach to knowledge and ways of knowing. This epistemological snobbery has resulted in a vicious cycle of entrenching oppression and has led to the fatigue of the researched (Dyson and Harrison 1997). When a participant in a focus group I conducted said:

“I know it sounds wrong but like... I find myself thinking, it is too big, I am Black, insecurity gives you low self-esteem, it shackles your confidence and because no matter how hard you work, there is still at the back of your mind, you still think this is too big for a Black girl (Female, Bedford Focus Group, 30th October 2009, Howson and Sallah 2010).

I could locate their struggle within my experiences and could understand the context in which these words are uttered. Cultural affinity/experiential affinity made it possible for the participants to open up to me more and this was especially more evident in the research around Black Children and discipline where the participants kept on including me in the “us” against them (referring to mainstream services). This was similarly mentioned by young Muslims who spoke of how “we” are treated and in the project in the East of England; young Black people often uttered the phrase “you know how it is”.

Methodological complexities

A number of methodological complexities exercised me in carrying out the research projects I listed earlier and ultimately my writings presented here and elsewhere. A key issue I encountered has been the issue of having to negotiate with “gatekeepers” to obtain access to research participants and in a sense having someone who could vouch that my intentions were honourable; this was especially the case in my research with Muslim communities in Leicester.

Another tension I had to grapple with was in choosing to use Participatory Action Research and informal approaches to learning, but in then having to present the findings acceptably to academic communities. Participatory Action Research in its true sense is led by the research participants. However, research is largely sponsored by funding bodies like local authorities

and is also subjected to academic judgment when presented to academic audiences from their constructed reality, especially those who practice “pure science”. Not only is the above a tension but it is also a challenge to find apt approaches to systematically analyse such wide and different data sources like role plays, focus groups, songs and online surveys.

Although a Black person, to some degree a Muslim and an ongoing witness to the excesses of globalisation, I am also trained to conduct research from a dominant culture perspective (imbued with a specific ideological orientation) and that means mostly a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched. Some of my methodological headaches include letting the stranglehold on power go; of trusting people, tipping the balance of power in their favour and learning to accept a consensus even where I disagreed; in essence to practice true democracy. This process I had to learn and the more I encounter this process, the more liberating I found it to be: having faith in people and seeing the transformation when people have faith in themselves – of demystifying the researcher and the research process. On the flipside of the situation, I also came to realise that on most occasions the research participants have internalised this hierarchical relationship as a given and part of the process for me has been learning from research participants as well as facilitating the deconstruction of their reality; Freire (1972) calls this breaking the “false consciousness”, to have a new reality and therefore to interact with the world in a new way, a way that gives power back to them.

Cumulative effect of influences on my research and writing

Freire’s work (1972, 1974, 1985, 1995) postulates that people may be incubated by internalized negative self-labels based on living with wider structural oppressions. As Thompson (2003) earlier argues, oppression takes place at the personal, cultural and structural levels, the cultural and structural being hinged on the dominating and prevailing ideologies. In the case of young Muslims, their construction as the “enemy within” has become embedded both culturally and structurally; Baroness Warsi (BBC 2011, online) suggests that prejudice against Muslims has “passed the dinner-table test”, denoting that this fabricated ideology has become so engrained that it has become normalised. In relation to Black young people, their ideological construction as the other; as immigrants even though the majority hold British citizenship is an ideological position arrived at due to the historical

process of immigration; I have explored this in depth (Sallah 2007a) and its linked to a dysfunctional service provision for Black young people.

A different type of educational process is then required if education is itself not to become the ideology that helps underpin that oppression. PAR is the living example of how education is mutual: young co-researchers learn about research methods and the researcher learns about how and why they may/may not be suitable for different contexts familiar to the young co-researchers. The notion of affinity constantly reminds the researcher that their social identity and their values are informing the research process, and thus require exposition (as part of the transparency of research) and critical reflection (as part of an assessment of the validity of data).

As stated from the beginning, a range of methodological and philosophical approaches inform my praxis and writing: centrally as enumerated these are intersectionality, Participatory Action Research, cultural/referential affinity and Freire's transformative education pedagogy. It should be noted that there have been developments since Freire's initial work and that globalisation has impacted by way of producing multiple identities, changing identities, and different ways of resisting oppressions.

Whilst class, power and ideology were perhaps central to Freire, the way these work now are different and gender is an important dimension across constructions of race, religion and globalization issues. Understanding this intersectionality and its cumulative effects as I have argued, is important, and pivotal in conceptualising the status quo in relation to working with Black young people, young Muslims and the impact of globalisation on young people. My affinity with those I have researched and worked with is cardinal to informing my perspective and in gaining greater insights into their struggle. Similarly using PAR as a methodological approach has been very empowering for both me and the people I have engaged in the research.

The remainder of the overview is presented in four chapters. Three chapters set out a particular context of work with young people, locates my own published work within this context, and where appropriate assesses the impact of my work.

In Chapter Two, the influence of racism and how lack of cultural competence impacts on the lives of young people is discussed, together with the notion of a distinct Black political identity. It is my contribution to these debates, illustrated through published works on working with Black families, especially around working with Black young people, which is the focus of this chapter.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the notion of Global Youth Work as a distinct methodology of working with young people, enabling them to make the personal, local, national and global links in a fast changing globalised world. Setting out the context of debates on globalisation, this chapter considers the contribution of my published works in applying insights derived from globalisation debates to the specific practice of supporting young people's education in a changing world, conducting research and developing pedagogy with youth workers to enable them to best educate young people in the context of globalisation.

In Chapter 4, attention turns to the impact of religion in understanding the experiences of young people, and especially the experiences of young Muslims living in the UK. The chapter considers my empirical work in documenting levels of deprivation and lack of access to a wide range of valued services and how this unequal access, coupled with ongoing geopolitical events, must be appreciated as a context within which effective youth work should be undertaken with young British Muslims. It further highlights the intersectionality of a range of variables in presenting a constructed identity for young Muslims.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, summarizes the impact my works have had both on debates around youth and community development within academic circles, and the impact my work has had on youth and community practice.

The Published works

Books

Howson, C. & Sallah, M. (eds.) (2009) *Europe's Established and Emerging Immigrant Communities: Assimilation, Multiculturalism or Integration?* Stoke on Trent: Trentham. ISBN 978-1-905541-14-0

*Sallah, M. & Howson, C. (eds.) (2007) *Working with Black Young People*. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. ISBN 978-1-85856-466-1

Articles and chapters

Sallah, M. (2011c) "Young and Muslim in Britain: How Responsive are Mainstream Services?". In: *Some still more equal than others? Equal opportunities for all* (ed.) Degirmencioglu, S.M. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, pp 131 – 144.

Sallah, M. (2009a) "Conceptual and Pedagogical Approaches to the Global Dimension of Youth Work in British Higher Education Institutions", *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*. 1 (3), pp. 39 -55.

Sallah, M. (2009b) "Dawn of a New Europe: Addressing 'Otherness'". In: *Europe's Established and Emerging Immigrant Communities: Assimilation, Multiculturalism or Integration?* (eds.) Howson, C. and Sallah, M. Stoke on Trent: Trentham, pp. 1 – 10.

Sallah, M. (2008a) "Black Young People in the UK: Charting the Tensions of Relativism and Dogmatism in Praxis". In: *The Politics of Diversity in Europe* (eds.) Titley, G. and Lentin, A. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, pp. 143-153.

*Sallah, M. (2007a) "Service Provision for Black Young People: Linking the Historical Policy Response to Praxis". In: *Working with Black Young People*. (eds.) Sallah, M. & Howson, C. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing, pp. 21-36.

*Sallah, M. (2007b) "Barriers Facing Young Muslims in Accessing Mainstream Provision in Leicester", *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Nations and Communities*. Volume 7, Number 3, pp. 99-108.

*Dacombe, R. & Sallah, M. (2006) "Racism and Young People in the UK". In *Prevention of Right-wing Extremism, Xenophobia and Racism in European Perspective*, (eds.) Rieker, P., Glaser, M. and Schuster, S. Halle: Deutsches Jugendinstitut, pp. 79 – 95.

*All of the 4 publications asterisked were submitted as part of De Montfort University's 2008 RAE submissions under Unit 40 -Social Work and Social Policy & Administration. Whilst no individual assessments are available, it is worth noting that all of the unit's submissions were judged to be at least "nationally recognised".

The published works context

Around 2001, I was assigned as the key worker of an 11 year old Black child who was taken into care because, according to the case social worker, she was at risk of physical abuse. As I worked with the young child and came to know both her and her parents, I came to the conclusion that both the case social worker and the structural system which incubated her praxis were flawed and culturally incompetent as they did not understand the child and her family's construction of social reality. Consequently within three months of the child coming into care her metamorphosis, from being polite and soft spoken to manifesting deviant behaviours, influenced by some of the older children who were already involved in these activities, was truly tragic. I kept in touch with her and continued to mentor her even after I left the job and to her great credit; she changed her life and started to go to college which made all of us involved with her proud. Unfortunately I learnt of her death in early 2010; she drowned in her bath due to a reoccurring illness she suffered from.

My interaction with her and her family as well as the mainstream agencies that intervened in her life left me morally outraged and that triggered my motivation for the need for more research, evidence and knowledge in those being "othered", over the past 10 years. This emotional drive has similarly led me to explore the needs of young Muslims and the perceived barriers they faced in accessing mainstream services. My relationship with Global Youth Work predates either of the aforementioned; as an African school boy walking 5 Km to school every day to being the President of the Gambia Students' Union and later the Youth Director of the Gambia Red Cross, I have been confronted with the excesses of global inequality and has been a firsthand witness to the impact of global capitalist hegemony and

its neoliberal manifestation in International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities. This has led me to be more passionate in creating a more just and equal world.

Against this background, I have been involved in over 20 publications over the last five years and spoken at numerous conferences both in the UK and Europe within the same time span around issues of race/ethnicity, religion and globalisation in relation to young people.

Published works summary

Sallah, M. (2011c) “Young and Muslim in Britain: How Responsive are Mainstream Services?” In: *Some still more equal than others? Equal opportunities for all* (ed.) Degirmencioglu, S.M. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. pp. 131-144.

This chapter was initially presented in a research seminar organised by the Directorate of Youth and Sports, Council of Europe and after a peer review process, some of the presenters were invited to contribute a chapter. The chapter, based on research with a large sample of young Muslims, explores perceived barriers they face in formal and informal education, housing, criminal justice, health and in relation to social cohesion. This chapter presents the findings from the research and makes detailed recommendations for practitioners and policy makers.

Sallah, M. (2009a) “Conceptual and Pedagogical Approaches to the Global Dimension of Youth Work in British Higher Education Institutions”, *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*. 1 (3) pp 39 – 55.

This paper, published in a peer refereed international journal explores the state of Global Youth Work in British HEIs. It is, as yet, the widest study undertaken on how British Higher Education Institutions delivering Youth and Community Work JNC or equivalent courses conceptualise and operationalise approaches to global learning.

Sallah, M. (2009b) “Dawn of a New Europe: Addressing “Otherness”. In: *Europe’s Established and Emerging Immigrant Communities: Assimilation, Multiculturalism or Integration?* (eds.) Howson, C. and Sallah, M. Stoke on Trent: Trentham. Pp. 1-10.

This book brings together some of the leading writers in their fields to explore a range of issues concerning Europe's established and emerging immigrant communities: religion, health, housing, refugees and asylum seekers, working in post conflict ethnic zones, community cohesion in rural areas, security, Gypsies and Travellers. The first part of the book looks at such topics across Europe whilst the second explores specific issues using the UK as a microcosm. Readers are offered a wide range of perspectives based on empirical research and grounded in critical analyses, as well as responses to the new challenges confronting Europe. I took the lead in organising a conference of the same title in November 2007 attended by over 100 practitioners and academics from within and outside the UK. I also took the lead in editing the book in addition to writing a chapter that presents an overview of the book.

Sallah, M. (2008a) "Black Young People in the UK: Charting the Tensions of Relativism and Dogmatism in Praxis". In: *The Politics of Diversity in Europe* (eds.) Titley, G. and Lentin, A. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. Pp. 143 – 153.

Originally presented as a paper in an international seminar organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration with other partners, this chapter is largely based on my research concluded in 2004 exploring the boundary between abuse and discipline in the UK involving 41 young people and 25 Black parents (those of South Asian, African and Caribbean origins). This chapter is one of a collection that examines the politics of diversity in Europe. Using evidence from the research, this chapter argues that practitioners are often caught between the tensions of relativism and dogmatism in praxis with fatal consequences as in the case of Victoria Climbié; to the contrary, this paper rejects these stances and advocates for cultural competency.

Sallah, M. (2007a) "Service provision for black young people: linking the historical policy response to praxis". In: Sallah, M. and Howson, C. (eds.) *Working with Black Young People*. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. pp. 21-36.

This is an important collection, integrating research with messages for practitioners in an area where there has as yet been insufficient material published. This collection explores Black young people and a range of pertinent issues relevant to practitioners who work with

them. This book also formed the focal point for a major conference in the summer of 2006. As well as jointly editing the publication, I contributed a chapter to it and wrote the introduction.

Drawing on research conducted in 2004 around the boundary between abuse and discipline in Black families (those of South Asian, African and Caribbean origins), this chapter argues that British social policy in relation to Black people has largely been a matter of reactive fire fighting and those at the cutting edge, practitioners, sometimes implement policy directives to the detriment of Black young people.

Sallah, M. (2007b) “Barriers facing young Muslims in accessing mainstream provision in Leicester”, *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*, 3 (7), pp. 99-108.

This paper, published in an international peer reviewed journal, examines barriers young Muslims face in accessing mainstream provision. It is based on research carried out in Leicester, one of Europe’s most diverse cities. The analysis is based on the findings from structured questionnaire responses from 500 young Muslims, six focus groups with 40 young people, one with Muslim parents, eight representatives of statutory organisations and eight representatives of voluntary/madrasah Muslim organisations. The article looks beyond the rhetoric of “war on terror” and “threat of Islamic extremism” to the concrete forms of social organisation and their limitations in addressing issues of importance to young Muslims.

Sallah, M. and Dacombe, R. (2006) “Racism and young people in the United Kingdom”. In Rieker, P., Glaser, M. and Schuster, S. eds. *Prevention of Right Wing Extremism, Xenophobia and Racism in European Perspective*. Halle: Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V. pp. 79-95.

This chapter is co-authored with Rod Dacombe, formerly of Oxford University and is part of a Europe-wide review analysing the position of young people in relation to racism/right-wing extremism. Based on research individually conducted by the authors, this chapter discusses racism in relation to young people in the UK and relevant historical and

contemporary policy, and it highlights good practice in formal education and community development settings. It was commissioned by the DJI (German Youth Institute). I mainly dealt with the historical and contemporary aspects of race in the paper and informal strategies, whilst Rod Dacombe dealt with formal education.

Chapter 2

Race, ethnicity and young people

Introduction

Constructions of race and ethnicity continue to affect how some people are viewed. These internal and external constructions therefore may constitute a significant aspect of their sum total of reality and accordingly, their symbiotic interaction with the institutions of society. It has been argued recently that racism must continuously mutate in order for it to survive (McVeigh & Rolston, 2007). Gilroy (1987:11) echoes this sentiment: “Racism does not, of course, move tidily and unchanged through time and history. It assumes new forms and articulates new antagonisms in different situations.” This insight informs my understanding of challenging how this discrimination is effected, consciously or unconsciously, as this needs constant recalibration. This chapter locates my body of work and its theoretical and policy contribution to the topic of how constructions of race and ethnicity affect the lives of Black young people. It starts with an exploration of the changing demographics of Europe generally and the UK in particular. It then looks at the political definition of Black and my contribution to racial and ethnic considerations in relation to working with Black young people. The impact of cultural competence, based on mainstream practitioners gaining the required skills, knowledge and resources will also be explored. It concludes that culturally

competent praxis from mainstream services is needed to effectively engage with Black young people.

Changing demographics of Europe generally and UK particularly

The once dichotomous construction of “race” as a palpable demarcation between Black and white is no longer the case, there are far too many variables to allow for the postulation of a single divider on which identities are constructed. Additionally the cumulative effect of a range of variables in interaction, intersectionality, needs to be borne in mind, in how identities are constructed and deconstructed, and how these are in constant motion and interaction. However the boundary remains the point at which difference is constructed and enacted (Barth 1969). The precise form of the boundary has changed over time and between societies, but what youth work, and arguably those in the field of anti-discriminatory practice, have no option but to engage with is that people operate with notions of racialized boundaries between groups of people, that this affects young people’s lives, and that this should therefore intimately affect youth work pedagogy and how we prepare youth workers to educate young people. As Freire argued:

“There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes ‘the practice of freedom,’ the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire 1972:16).

There is then a need to understand that the site of struggle is in the constructed “realities” of the young people who bear witness to oppressive structures and the role youth workers play in supporting young people and mainstream practitioners understand these realities. The task of the struggle is to begin to dismantle them, in the face of increasing diversity.

The recent demographic changes over the past fifty years across Europe (Sallah 2009b; Ramadan 2009; Hoskins and Sallah 2011) has led to what Ramadan (2007) calls an identity “crisis” in the sense that, whilst new and rapidly upward mobile demographic changes confront Europe, old constructions of dealing with difference in the social, economic and political spaces largely remain, with adverse implications for the populations concerned. In addition, “1.3 million migrants are needed annually in Europe between now and 2025” (Bopp, 2009) for Europe to be able to continue to support its pension system and service the

economy. This illustrates that the complexity and diversity Europe is confronted with is not about to diminish and therefore is not an issue to be easily brushed under the carpet. The UK has not been an exception and has seen its ethnic minority population rise significantly over the last fifty years (Sallah 2007a). In addition, the young age structure of the minority ethnic population in the UK (Census 2001), like the rest of Europe, means that such communities continue to grow fastest, yet questions continue to hang over the cultural competence of practitioners in mainstream domains (Ashrif 2007), to effectively engage or intervene in their lives.

What is cultural competence?

It is pivotal that I introduce the concept of intercultural /cultural competence here as my work with youth workers around issues of race, religion and globalisation has largely been geared towards generating cultural competence in an increasingly diverse Europe in general and in the UK in particular. In relation to globalisation, I have introduced the concept of global literacy (Sallah 2010) which I will explore in greater detail in the next chapter. According to Hofstede (1991: 16), culture is 'the collective mental programming which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another'. Implicit in this definition is the idea of a worldview, which determines how the world is experienced and therefore constructed with respect to specific groups or communities. Fantini (2000:31) sees cultural competence as 'transcending the limitations of one's own world view'. Deardorf (2006: 7) builds on this definition and catalogues four main dimensions of intercultural competence: "intercultural knowledge and skills, an ability to reflect on intercultural issues as internal outcome, and an ability to interact constructively as external outcome of intercultural competence". She further argues that "intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, based on specific attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills and reflection". Willems (2002: 19) conceptualises intercultural competence as finding a common 'tongue in which we can speak our humanity to each other'. As a colleague and I have argued elsewhere:

"In recent years the Council of Europe has been working towards developing a more complex notion of culture through utilizing the concept of intercultural dialogue. It developed this concept through a consultation process with member states and stakeholders in the field and published in a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue called "Living Together as Equals in Dignity" (Council of Europe 2008). The document highlights the belief of member states that their policy strategies for engaging with

diversity, in which they refer to themselves as either multicultural or having assimilation policies, have failed and a new policy approach is required. This new approach is referred to as intercultural dialogue and now forms the Council of Europe horizontal policy strategy for social cohesion” (Hoskins and Sallah 2011:117-118).

Using a range of terminologies like intercultural competence, intercultural learning, intercultural dialogue and cultural competence; the concept attempts to develop the required skills, knowledge and values for practitioners in the mainstream to effectively engage with Europe’s increasing diversity. The desired outcomes of intercultural learning have:

“...been described by Cuhna and Gomes (2010 p.86) as ‘tolerance of ambiguity’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘empathy’. Tolerance of ambiguity has been explained by Otten (2010 p.89) as the ability to ‘on the one hand, (to) recognise cultural differences amongst European societies and communities; (and) on the other hand, acknowledge the intrinsic uncompleted character of each cultural system and, therefore, acceptance of the ambiguity and multiple uncertainties generated by the cultural encounters’. As such, ‘tolerance of ambiguity’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘empathy’ could be understood as aspects of intercultural competence” (Hoskins and Sallah 2011:119).

Whilst the Council of Europe has recently given this area of work more attention, my colleague and I have been struck by the focus of intervention on the personal and not necessarily on the cultural and structural (Thompson 2003) and posted a criticism of this approach as thus:

The whole range of terminologies used to define the area ranging from intercultural competence to intercultural dialogue portrays a propensity to a soft core approach underlying and underpinning the conceptual framework from an apolitical perspective. But as Freire (1972) incisively argued, education is political. The Council of Europe (2009) promotes intercultural encounters that take place across a range of cultural boundaries such as ethnic groups, religious groups, language groups, racial groups, national and state groups, local and regional groups, and supranational groups. In some instances, to portray these encounters as intercultural is to underestimate the situation as these can often be systematic, discriminatory and oppressive one-way encounters” (Hoskins and Sallah 2011:121).

From this short expose on cultural competence, it is heartening to note the Council of Europe’s recent interest in this increasingly significant domain, given the growing complexities of Europe’s demographics. However, the full structural nature of oppression against those “othered” and the power of ideological state apparatuses referred to earlier, is yet to be given the attention it deserves. My work, as I will present later, has continued to

focus on how practitioners, especially in the youth work field, continue to counter what can at times be construed as an oppressive reality.

Political definition of Black

Searching for a term to encapsulate definitions of difference can be a site of contestation and I am quite aware of the problematic nature of using certain terminologies. However, I use the political definition of Black (Robinson, 1998; Patel and Chouhan, 1998; Chouhan et al., 1996) even though this is an increasingly fragmented ideological concept that has come under attack (Macey 1995; Katz 1996; Modood 1988, 1990; Thoburn et al. 2000). I use it deliberately on an ideological basis because it represents the collective of “Othered” people subjected to personal and structural discrimination and oppression on the basis of their constructed ethnicity and/or racial origin. My work operates from the assumption of a shared political Black identity, in opposition to the work of Modood (1990) but congruent with Barn and Harman (2006).

Whilst I am a staunch advocate for the political definition of Black, I am increasingly made aware of the hybridity of identity and the complex variables involved in constructions of the “Other”. The intersectionality of these variables; race, gender, nationality, faith, age, sexuality, disability for example, is also another focus of analysis. For example this focus can be on the interplay young Black women face between racism and sexism or the disproportionate nature of race, class and gender that is manifested in the fact that African Caribbean Heritage boys are five times more likely to be excluded than their white counterparts. This can equally be evidenced by the fact that Bangladeshi boys continue to be blighted by their class, linked to deprivation and their religion, which is manifested again in them being one of the lowest achieving groups in education. However, there is no unproblematic term that I have encountered; in fact one of my latest writing in this subject (Sallah 2009b) uses the term “Europe’s established and emerging immigrant communities”, albeit, with a degree of caution. This illustrates the point I went to great lengths to make (Sallah 2007a); that even the term ethnic minorities can in itself be problematic: what about Jews or the Irish? Does one label them white or ethnic minorities? The following quotation goes on to illustrate the problematic nature of using the minority label:

"The term ‘minority’ has connotations of ‘less important’ or ‘marginal’. In many settings it is not only insulting but also mathematically misleading or inaccurate.

Further, its use perpetuates the myth of white homogeneity – the notion that everyone who does not belong to a minority is by that token a member of a majority in which there are no significant differences or tensions." (Parekh 2000: xxiii)

What about in places like Leicester, Bradford and Birmingham, which are projected to have white people as ethnic minorities? It is also worth noting that some top statisticians (see for example Finney & Simpson, 2009) have disputed the idea of postulating a single homogenised White identity and this illustrates the problem that 'White' is largely an untheorised conglomerate that includes (1) White British; (2) White Irish/ White Jewish/White Arab/White Poles/ Those Mixed White/Black who choose to foreground White (all of whom may experience racism).

The problematic nature of terminology is exacerbated by the fact that 1) there is no consensus and 2) this situation is dynamic and constantly evolving. Hence my decision to opt for the usage of the political definition of Black, which rests on the political standpoint that this term co-notates.

The author's contribution

In relation to race, my focus has been on work with Black young people. The issues have shifted from the plight of the immigrant child (Barn 2001) to "citizens" and issues of disadvantage due to racism (Kundnani 2007), especially in relation to discrimination in childcare (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002) and in informal education (Chauhan 1990). My body of works departs from blaming the victim (Dacombe and Sallah 2006; Sallah 2007b; Sallah 2007a; Sallah and Howson 2007; Sallah 2008a) to critically exploring the structures that oppress, and the cultural competency of the practitioner. Again Freire's view (1972:29) that: "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognise its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" helps explain my rationale for engaging youth workers to review their reality and for breaking their "false consciousness" where this exists, in order to begin to understand the personal, cultural and structural nature of oppression before they begin to work with Black young people. This process precedes cultural competence. For some, cultural competency and anti-oppressive practice should be a given; sadly this is not

the case in my experience of teaching and researching the subject. To the contrary some practitioners' perception of reality is limited to their own worldview, which cannot even begin to conceptualise discrimination at the personal, cultural and structural levels for oppressive groups let alone begin to understand it.

My principal contributions in the field of race and ethnicity considerations when working with Black young people have been as follows. Sallah (2009b) explores the dawn of a new Europe and the need to recalibrate mainstream practitioners' understandings of people from "Other" backgrounds. Sallah (2008a) explores the extremes of relativism and dogmatism in praxis against the backdrop of a sample of Black children and parents. Sallah and Howson (2007) is an edited collection of chapters exploring various dimensions of working with Black young people and contributing immensely to a range of topics including refugees, forced marriage, the youth service, masculinity and identity amongst others in relation to Black young people. In addition to co-editing the book, I also wrote a chapter exploring the links between the present stage of disadvantage for most Black young people in spheres of life like education, housing, criminal justice and employment and a historical process of government policies with its genesis in responses to post World War Two immigration; an ideological position of treating the other as less significant. The prevailing ideology against immigrants and their descendants was that they were different and did not belong; therefore could not be afforded citizenship; the first and second generations especially, were meant to go home and because of these perceptions, these ideological positions, more by stealth, became cultural and structural positions (Thompson 2003). Dacombe and Sallah (2006) explored anti-racist work with young people in both the formal and informal sector and included examples of advancing praxis.

Thompson (2003) postulates that oppression and discrimination can take place at the personal, cultural and structural levels. He identifies the personal as "one's thoughts, feelings and actions at the individual level" and the cultural as "the way in which members of a particular group become so immersed in its patterns, assumptions and values that they do not even notice that they are there" whilst the structural "comprises the macro-level which influences and constraints the various social, political and economic aspects of the

contemporary social order” (Thompson 2003: 13 - 17). Whilst the discrimination experienced by Black people, especially young people in this case, has been well documented at all three levels (CRE 1998; Cabinet Office Strategy Report 2003; Rupra 2007), the focus has often been on their disadvantaged plight and how they themselves have contributed to their disadvantaged position. Analysis (Murray 1990, 1996) is often directed at pathologising and rationalising their less than desirable station in life. This process is often at odds with the structural oppression that Thompson (2003) postulates. My work (Dacombe and Sallah 2006; Sallah 2007a) directs attention to the oppressive historical and immigration processes that have resulted in the positioning of Black people within society. Other commentators (Miles & Phizacklea 1984; Sivanandan 1982; Centre for Contemporary Studies 1982) have explored the impact of post-colonial processes that drew in workers to fill low paid and dangerous occupations. A significant number of post colonial theorists (Rodney 1973; Wa Thiong’o 1986; Fanon 1968; Nkrumah 1996; Centre for Contemporary Studies 1982) have also documented the impact of the hangovers of colonialism on the descendents of colonial subjects living both in the West and in former colonies. A common theme espoused by most of these commentators is the impact that colonial processes, even though colonialism has ostensibly “ended”, continue to be visited on these people. For example, this includes how colonialism has left a post-colonialist legacy in the construction of their reality. For instance the fact that their economies were mainly turned into mono-crop economies has constructed them in post-colonial times as metaphorical hewers of wood, confined to subsistence level agricultural work. This post-colonial experience is manifested directly in the realities constructed by and for Black people in the UK.

In keeping with the theme of post colonialist impact on those with origins from former British colonies, Bernard Coard talked about *How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system* (Coard 1971) as a process of the education system failing Black children, but then pathologising the individual child. John (1981) deplored the paucity of services for immigrant children in his seminal work: *In the service of black youth: a study of the political culture of youth and community work with black people in English cities*. Troyna and Williams (1986) and Chauhan criticised the cultural tourism of some practitioners largely limited to the superficial level of “steel bands and samosas” (Chauhan 1990; Howson 2009). All of these works have engaged with the

historical processes which have given birth to the depressing statistics (Dacombe & Sallah 2006; Sallah, 2007a) which show Black young people as more vulnerable to being caught up in the criminal justice system, excluded from education, to being unemployed and being subjected to a host of other socially undesirable conditions. I have gone further by exploring how service provision for Black young people has been historically linked to constructed notions of the Black child as the Other, who is not necessarily fully British and on a temporary domicile, signifying that they will go back home one day and will not stay forever in Britain. The processes of assimilation, multiculturalism and integration, as British social policy responses to the children of immigrants (Sallah 2007a) reveals that they were not constructed as normal and therefore had to change in order to fit into the system, rather than the other way round where the system changes in order to accommodate diversity. This is an experience I labelled as “Immigrant Citizens” in my writings where young people might be legally British or French, but where socially and economically, they might be deprived. A critical review of historical and contemporary documents in this direction (Sallah 2007a; Dacombe and Sallah 2006) has allowed me to chart the shifts in British social policy - recruitment, restriction, repatriation, multiculturalism, and mainly now integration.

Post World War Two immigration has led to many Black people mainly from South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa settling into Britain. Whilst a significant number of this population were recruited to help in the rebuilding of Britain after the devastating impact of the Second World War, economic interests were satisfied by the late sixties as Britain had almost recovered economically. However the “social problems” that were constructed as a consequence of the large influx of Black people were to result, first, in the Notting Hill riots which were triggered by unprovoked attacks by some white people on Caribbean migrants, and two decades later in more violent riots/uprisings which came to be known as the Brixton riots/rebellions symbolised by Black resistances to decades of unemployment, low pay and criminalization. The extra trigger was Operation Swamp (itself an offensive term that picked up on Thatcher’s 1978 speech in Cheltenham about the UK being “swamped”). Throughout this period, my body of works has demonstrated that until the Brixton riots Black people, considered as immigrants, were not meant to settle in Britain permanently; they were meant to go back home and consequently services did little to interact with them on their own terms. As I have argued (Sallah, 2007a); the aftermath of the Second World War saw the active recruitment of immigrants but this was curtailed and a period of restriction introduced after

Notting Hill with the introduction of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act which made it considerably difficult for primary immigrants to continue coming in. The focus after this was on reducing secondary immigration (wives and children joining husbands who had settled).

It can be argued that this resulted in the application of blanket discriminatory policies and practices across the board to the detriment of Black people. For example, the virginity tests in 1979, where female partners were subjected to the inhumane and degrading gynaecological examination at their arrival from countries of origin in South Asia, carried the implication that those who were not virgins were illegal entrants (Saggar, 1992). This inhumane treatment, sanctioned by law, was implemented in the name of the British people. Another aspect was the X-ray examinations to which pregnant women and other vulnerable groups like children from Bangladesh were subjected to determine their age even though experts have confirmed that such procedures can be inaccurate by a number of years (Saggar, 1992). The dispersal policies and practices from the mid 1960s constitutes another point in hand; a DES Circular in 1965 stated that no more than 30% of pupils in any school should be composed of immigrant children because of the “serious strain” it would cause. In addition, the “one-in-six” housing allocation rule practiced in places like Birmingham (Flett, Herderson and Brown 1979, cited in Williams 1989) bear witness to discrimination officially carried out under the auspices of the law. Sivanandan (1990) further argues that councils like Slough even literally paid people to go back “home”. These measures made it difficult for the immigrants to stay in the UK in terms of housing, education, and social welfare. This was also the case in the realm of the criminal justice system. For example, the misuse by police of an archaic law (Sections 4 and 6 of the 1824 vagrancy Act) to stop-and-search anyone they pleased, a tactic then disproportionately used against Black people, deepened the alienation that Black people felt. My argument is that ideologically, racism was a dominant ideology sanctioned by the state; it was normalised and acceptable across dinner tables just as Baroness Warsi (BBC 2011 online) has more recently spoken of “dinner table Islamophobia”. This therefore determined how Black young people were constructed and interacted with – a charge of institutional racism.

However, the accusation of institutional racism was one rejected by Lord Scarman (who led the review into the Brixton riots) and he rejected the charge of institutional discrimination thus:

“It was alleged by some of those who made representations to me that Britain is an institutionally racist society, if by that it is meant that it is a society which knowingly, as a matter of policy, discriminates against black people, I reject that allegation. If, however, the suggestion being made is that practices may be adopted by public bodies as well as private individuals which are unwittingly discriminatory against black people, then this is an allegation which deserves serious consideration, and where proved, swift remedy” (Scarman 1981: 28).

In commenting about the state of Black people at the time, Scarman further admitted that:

“Discriminatory and hostile behaviour on hostile grounds is not confined to the area of unemployment, there is evidence that it occurs not only among school children and in the street but, unintentionally, no doubt in the provision of some local authority services.....(Scarman, 1981: 28).

The Scarman Report can be said to be the turning point when public policy came to accept that Black people were here to stay. However the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 (MacPherson, 1999) was to lead to the acknowledgement that the charge of Britain being institutionally racist could be validated. According to MacPherson, institutional racism:

“...consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes or behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (MacPherson 1999, online).

Interestingly, the MacPherson Report uses a similar definition to Scarman: institutional racism consists of unintended consequences. In my work, unintended consequences have been explored with respect to child care and the competency of practitioners to engage with Black young people within mainstream structures.

Victoria Climbié died on the 25th of February 2001 after being abused and tortured to by her aunt and her aunt’s partner. Social Services had been made aware of Victoria’s case as early as 14th July 1999 but could not intervene to save her from a horrific death. My work argues that it was stereotyping and a lack of a culturally competent intervention that led to Victoria’s

tragic death. Services had not developed cultural competence that would allow practitioners to actively engage with members of the Black community, to navigate between a respect for differences in cultural notions of the nature of the abuse in relation to the child and parents, whilst at the same time being able to challenge extreme forms of or perversions of that culture that was misused to justify the abuse that occurred.

All of these above cited cases of conscious and unconscious discrimination, show gaps in understanding and effectively intervening in Black people's, especially young Black people's lives. This has been demonstrated in my body of works as a theoretical contribution to knowledge in this area, premised on the basis that before any meaningful work around integration and cohesion can begin, there must be greater understanding of the realities and the intersectionality of the realities Black young people face, and of the various contexts for work with them.

Whilst the demographics of the majority populations continue to decline, most of the Black populations continue to rise (Sallah 2009b), with those of mixed parentage the fastest growing. For those of mixed parentage, they have to come to terms with both their Black and white heritages and these are the various realities they need to negotiate amongst other competing variables and the intersectionality of these variables. In the same light, most Black young people are descendents of people who have migrated to Britain over the past 50 years and the "politics of back home" and how social reality is constructed is sometimes different from the mainstream reality. In fact there could be a third reality that Black young people have to negotiate: mainstream, minority and a further youth sub-culture. Phan Le Ha (2008) talks about the need to negotiate a "third space", which takes into consideration both the minority and majority constructions of reality, into a third realm where reality is negotiated and renegotiated. My work builds on that of Landrine (1992) and incorporates concepts of racial socialisation (Peters 1985), bi-culturalism (Harrison et al, 1990, cited in Saigeetha et al. 2000) and triple consciousness (Boykin and Toms, 1985), all of which explore the ability of young people to multi-function in different cultures. The originality of my work, outlined in this thesis, lies in not only how young people construct and enact "reality" in what Berger and Luckmann (1966) call the "symbolic universe", but in how practitioners, who are now expected to operate in a multicultural, multiracial and multi-faith society, effectively engage

with these people and their families, in whose lives they are trying to intervene, purportedly in the best interest of the child. Freire (1972:33) talks about oppressive reality consuming those within it; in this light my pedagogy seeks to engage practitioners to shatter this oppressive and false reality as a starting point. Owusu-Bempah (2003) has catalogued a host of instances where the practitioners' lack of understanding of the young person's reality has resulted in serious consequences and in some instances even fatalities, the most high profile of which is the Victoria Climbié case. Owusu-Bempah (2003) further argues that political correctness has gone too far when experienced white practitioners are afraid of taking up cases where Black clients would benefit from their experiences because of the fear of being accused of racism. This fear, as a participant in my research articulated it, "disabled" him from practising, leading to accusations of dogmatism where "everything under the sun goes by" for fear of being branded a racist. A diametrically opposed position is to highlight the inability of some practitioners to effectively locate the young people within their construction of social reality and therefore effectively intervene in their lives. The following quotation from one of my research publications supports this point:

"This view has been consistently expressed throughout the research by 60% of parents; that practitioners like teachers and social workers, who deal with their children on a face-to-face basis do not sometimes know enough about the cultural background of a child, especially childrearing, to make a fair judgement in the best interest of the child" (cited in Sallah, 2007a: 32).

My work explored the process of constructing reality and in my research, exploring the boundary between abuse and discipline with Black children and parents (Sallah, 2008a), it became apparent that Black families and the practitioners intervening in their lives often have different constructions of reality and this has often lead to disastrous praxis. My research further found that:

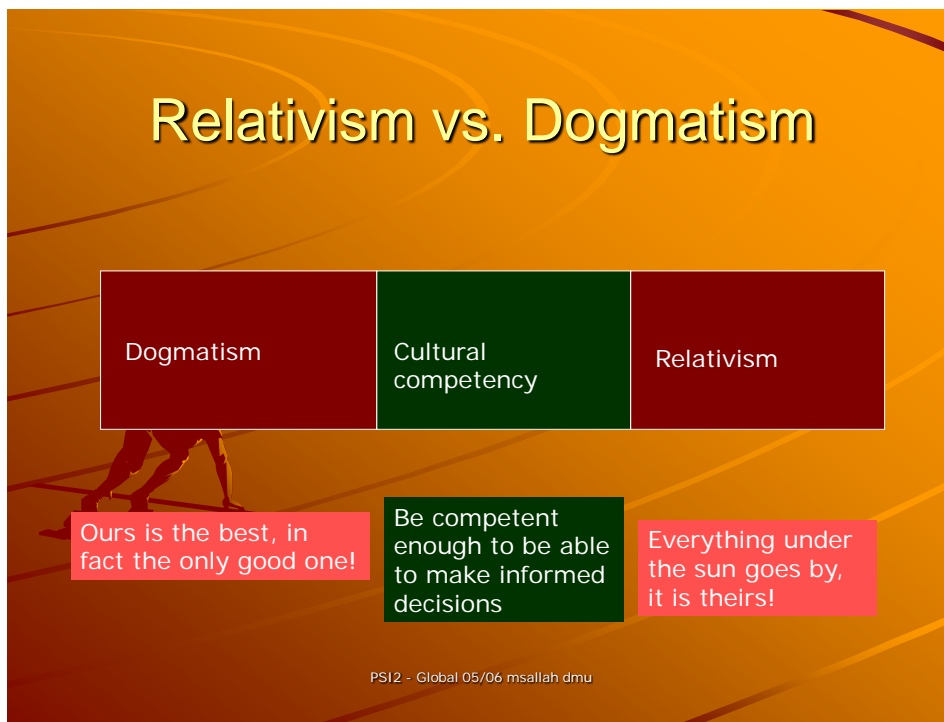
- A Eurocentric model of parenting is not the best according to the sample of Black children and parents
- Black childrearing practices are not respected by some mainstream practitioners
- There exists a deep suspicion of Social Services among Black parents

A strong example of the contribution of my research is the location of the self in interventions. Gaines (1982), Landrine (1992) and Owusu-Bempah (1998) argue that the self

can be constructed in two ways; the collective, also sometimes called the indexical self, versus the primary, also known as the referential self. The collective/indexical self works from a sociocentric perspective that posits no omnipotent self in the collective but as part of a network where every individual sees him/herself as indexed to others and all actions correspond with this reality. The primary/referential self on the other hand “is construed as an autonomous entity defined by its distinctiveness and separateness from the natural and social world” (Landrine 1992: 404). My research found that in locating the self, social work practitioners constructed the child as an individual with equal rights and needs contrary to most Black parents I interviewed (2008a), for whom the child was considered as “an extension of one’s self”, denoting a collective/indexical approach to the self. This is significant in that where mainstream practitioners’ construction of reality is at variance with the Black clients; it has serious repercussions – as was tragically discovered in the case of Victoria Climbié. My studies (Sallah 2008a; 2007a) into this area contributed significantly to research around Black children, an area where previously there had been a dearth of research. My research also contributed in crucial ways to understanding influences in the formation of Black parents’ and children’s realities, to understanding the place of the child in Black childrearing, and to critiquing the Eurocentric model of childrearing, thereby advancing knowledge in this highly neglected area. This has advanced knowledge and helped practitioners to develop a deeper understanding of the realities of Black children and families.

This has led to the development of my interest in further researching and writing about cultural competency which I see as the *sine qua non* of working with Black young people in a modern and multicultural Britain. I have explored the required skills, knowledge, resources and values in my body of works in relation to what cultural competence embodies.

Furthermore, I have also developed a continuum of cultural competence (in the diagram below) which conceptualises the extremes of relativism, dogmatism and locates cultural competence as the desired pinnacle of practice. This conceptual model is a practical way for practitioners to reflect on the competency of their stance and has been widely used in my teaching, writings and in the numerous trainings and conferences I have presented both in the UK and across Europe.



Black young people, resistance and struggle

Whilst this section of the thesis in particular and the whole thesis in general is about the competency of practitioners in the youth work field, I will not do justice to the topic if I do not briefly mention the capacity of young people in resisting cultural and structural oppression. The young people I encounter in my research and work do not all accept the status quo as inevitable but actively resist its oppressive nature. Lord Herman Ouseley captures this: “What is most heart warming today, is how many Black young people survive and thrive, in spite of the struggles and obstacles” (Ouseley 2007 in Sallah and Howson 2007). Ranging from the Brixton uprisings and riots/uprisings in a number of cities in the early 80s to young Black people engaged in the illegal informal economy to the recent rise of young Black people converting to Islam in huge numbers, young Black people continue to survive and thrive in spite of all the oppressive structures they continue to be confronted with. This resistance is also manifested in Black young people joining gangs which offer security, significance and solidarity to its members and buffers against the oppressive external structures. Black youth culture, from its embracement of the Rastafarian and Rude boy culture as a protest against Babylon to the recent lyrics of Ms Dynamite who sang that “black roses grow from concrete”, reveals a resistance culture; additionally the number of Black young people who also work within their communities to make a difference or excel in

school refuse to give in as hopeless victims at the mercy of the “system”. In addition to the Black young people resisting, their families also recognise the urgency to provide alternatives; as David Gillborn’s (2008) work argues: Black families give their children a head start compared to their white socio-economic counterparts, a head start that is then squandered by the schools. Parents also pay for supplementary education both to compensate for the poor educational input of schools and the lack of culturally relevant curricula. Notwithstanding these nuances, my focus for this thesis has been on the competency or the lack of it thereof of practitioners. The myriad ways in which Black people resist global neo-liberalism (from sub-cultures, to music, to informal economies, to mutual self-help) would require a thesis in its own right.

In my work and throughout this chapter, I have attempted to highlight the significance of dominant ideologies in shaping the lives of those who are othered for a number of reasons, mostly in this case because of their race and ethnicity. This greatly affects how society perceives and interacts with most Black young people as well as how Black young people construct their reality. The following quotation from a young person I encountered during one of my research projects illustrates how reality “permeates us as much as it envelops us” (Berger, 1966:140):

“Black people have got this belief in their head that they are only good for certain things, they can’t achieve any higher than that,it is because when you see something every day, it becomes the norm, it is like it is normal, when you go to a place and see all the low paid jobs, it’s only Black people doing it, if you see it every day, you start thinking oh it is normal, I’m Black, then it’s normal for me to just aim for that and not aim higher” (Bedford focus group, Howson and Sallah 2010:10)

The above quotation is important because it highlights how “normality” and “reality” can be internalised not only by the oppressor but also by the oppressed. This is where Freire’s thinking influences my work. His view that constructed reality is actually the battlefield and that dialogical education attempts to free both the oppressed and the oppressor from oppression, is a cardinal block of my thinking. As he further argues: “To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognise its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity” (Freire 1972:29). It is in this light that my thinking and writing has sought to support youth workers to deconstruct and reconstruct their reality; and ultimately the ways they support young people go through this process and bring relevance to it. Perhaps Freire’s

greatest attribute is his ability to synthesise theory with practice and again this is something that I have modified in locating the complex institutional and structural discrimination in Black young people's lives; as well as the actions and reactions of practitioners in this domain.

Conclusion

My overall research in this area, and more specifically my cultural continuum model, has been disseminated in many national and international seminars such as the Glasgow Anti-Racist Conference in 2007, the British Association of Adoption and Fostering in 2006, The Parenting Conferences in 2006 and 2007, the SALTO Intercultural Round Table 2009 in Rome as well as in a range of publications. Relativism in my continuum denotes a lack of understanding and demonstrated wariness of dealing with other cultures for fear of being accused of discrimination. On the other extreme end of the continuum, cultural dogmatism is espoused as an intolerance of minority cultures as well as a refusal to negotiate in that "third space" identified by Phan Le Ha (2008) as cited earlier. The ideal position I have come to, based on my research as well as a youth work practitioner with 20 years of experience, is that of cultural competence which requires practitioners to have the required knowledge, skills, resources and values to be efficient in anti-oppressive practice. This position of cultural competence is not a fixed qualification gained once-and-for-all, like learning to swim or ride a bicycle; it is a continuous learning to understand other people's realities. As the construction and negotiation of reality is not static but dynamic, this becomes an ongoing process.

My theoretical contribution in this area include editing the book, *Working with Black Young People* which received an excellent review in the *British Journal of Social Work* in which it was stated that the book

“...addresses relevant topics with academic rigour and passion. A publication such as this has been long overdue, we would have to go some way back in social work research to find one of similar depth and quality...and tackles many issues (e.g. race, identity, practice, role of voluntary sector organisations, forced marriages, education, community cohesion etc.) with clarity and commitment to addressing racism in its

various guises.... presents debates from historical and contemporary perspectives in a forceful manner with great heart... a key text” (Soroyaa, 2008, 600-601).

The *Howard Journal* similarly states that the book “raises illuminating and critical policy and practice questions for policy makers, practitioners and academics alike.” The book is being used in a range of social science courses like Youth and Community and Social Work as a key text.

The other two published works, (Sallah 2008a and Dacombe and Sallah 2006) have been placed in international publications, one by the Council of Europe and the other by the German Youth Institute, and both publications have been well received. As a result of the expertise I have developed following my research and publications, I am regularly invited as a keynote speaker both nationally and international; additionally I have been appointed to a Council of Europe’s Expert panel that advises on how it’s Directorate of Youth and Sports engages with young people from multicultural and disadvantaged backgrounds. I have also been invited to SALTO’s six person Reference Group on Intercultural Competence. At the local level, I sit on Leicester City Council’s Black Achievement Forum which deals with the high rate of underachievement of Black children in the Leicester Education Service. All of these forums afford me the opportunity to influence and shape policy on a regular basis. In addition, I have organised four national or international conferences over the past five years that brought together on average 100 academics, practitioners and policy makers on each occasion to present research, debate policies and find ways forward. All of the above have significantly contributed to the development of theory and practice.

Chapter 3

Global Youth Work

Introduction

Whilst the reverberations of the subprime mortgage crisis emanating from the US are still being felt in declining house prices and increasing redundancies, my work has focused on how the five faces of globalisation: economy, politics, culture, environment and technology impact on young people's lives, and how practitioners can engage young people in a quest for global literacy. My work centres on the innovative concept of Global Youth Work and how practitioners acquire and practice the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge required for this endeavour. Additionally I have published groundbreaking research on how Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) conceptualise and deliver Global Youth Work; this work also constituted a key input in a national conference on the same theme. This chapter will discuss the concept and process of globalisation, from there it will move on to distinguish Global Youth Work (GYW) from other forms of Development Education and then conclude with my overall contribution to knowledge in this field.

Concept and Process of Globalisation

From the onset, it is cardinal that a distinction is made between the concept and process of globalisation. The concept refers to the coinage and articulation of *globalisation* as an idea whilst the process refers to what is actually happening. The roots of the word globalisation can be traced back to McLuhan (1964) and Moore (1966). Waters (2001) suggests that the

term was used by The Economist (4/4/59) to report Italy's "globalised quota" and attributed Webster as the first major dictionary to offer a definition of globalisation in 1961.

Waters (2002:5) defines globalisation as "A social process in which the constraints of geography on economy, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly". Mathew Taylor, MP, on the other hand advanced that "In some ways, the best definition of globalisation may be that we all play in each others' backyards and the fences have been torn down between the gardens" (House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2002:12). Giddens (1999: 29) argues that the process of globalisation is transforming the political, technological and cultural landscape of the world as we know it but at its heart is "instantaneous electronic communication", which allows billions of dollars to be moved from one end of the earth to another "at the click of a mouse"; this has great significance in terms of human action and interaction. In a similar vein, Bauman (1998) talks about "time/space compression" leading to a "globalised" world; the time to move from one part of the world to another has been drastically cut whilst the space has shrunk as interaction is very much easier due to technological advancements.

Globalisation exists both as a process and as a concept; however analysts disagree as to exactly when the process of globalisation started. Frank and Gills (1996) and Tehranian (1998) argue that the process of globalisation started over 5000 years ago whilst Schaffer (1996) ascribed the start of the globalisation process to two significant dates: 1494 when people first came to have a conceptualisation of global geography given the "widespread use of maps and globes in schoolrooms" and the second date 1969 when the astronauts' photographs of the earth impacted on people's conceptions of the world and gave currency to the idea of the world as a global place (Schaffer 1996:10-11, cited in Abibul et al. 2000:17). Yet others advance a view that the process of globalisation began between 1870 – 1914, the period often described as "Era of classical gold standard" when there were no major wars taking place and trade was at its most prosperous, unhindered by protectionism. The catalyst for this phase was:

"The development of transportation and communication networks that physically linked together different parts of the planet, especially by railways, shipping and the

telegraph. The second was rapid growth of trade with its accompanying pattern of dependency, especially between the relatively industrialized countries of Western Europe and the rest. The third was a huge flow of capital mainly in the form of direct investment by European firms in non-industrialised areas” (Barracough 1978, cited in Waters 2001:27).

It has been said that there was a “Retreat into Nationalism” and “rising protectionism” between 1914 – 1945 which ended the first wave of globalisation. However the second wave of globalisation between 1945 – 1980 was a period of prosperity and led to rapid technological advancements and some people argued that this is the real start of globalisation (Waters 2001; Robertson 1990). This could be attributed to the fact that the US emerged from the Second World War with the most powerful economy and was largely able to dictate terms of trade especially with the establishment of General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) in 1947, now called the World Trade Organisation (WTO), leading to trade liberalization.

Whilst it can be argued that all of the previous stages can to some degree be classified as starting the process, it was the post 1980 period when developing countries broke into the global markets, especially the Asian Tigers, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Republic in the late 1980s, that really established globalisation as a process. This was speeded up with the advent of the internet and other technological advancements in the 1990s.

It can be stated that although the process is at least over 400 years old and some might say 5000 years (Frank & Gills 1996; Tehranian 1998), the use of the term gained currency in the mid 1980s (Robertson 1992, Waters 2001). Whichever era gave birth to globalisation as a concept or process, what most commentators have been able to agree on is that it is now a reality and here to stay. However it is also important to recognize that there is a school of thought that speaks of a post- globalisation era; basically the notion of globalisation being over post 9/11 (Ferguson 2005).

The House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs (2002) argue that the accelerated pace of globalisation has been facilitated by 1) Technological changes which has made communication easier 2) Trade liberalization which facilitated the flow of trade and reduce barriers 3) Capital market liberalization which refers to the relaxation of government restrictions in the market and has gone a long way in promoting a truly global market

especially since it started in the 1980s and 1990s. Globalisation as a process (Sallah 2011a; Sallah 2010) has led to a more interconnected world where time, space and distance have been conquered/compressed and where there is increasing consciousness of how distant events impact on all human beings, especially young people, economically, environmentally, culturally, politically and technologically. The significance is that the foyers of constructed reality for young people in the past used to be local and national but this domain is now extended to the global. It is important to note that two main reactions dominate the discourse around globalisation: the globaphiles often labeled as the proponents and the globaphobes often called the opponents (Oxfam 2002). The implications for understanding the multiple and complex ways in which globalisation is conceptualised is pivotal in carrying out effective Global Youth Work. It is not only important for youth workers to wrestle with these issues before they begin to support young people in constructing and deconstructing their reality; it is cardinal that youth workers build their theory from which their practice can be launched.

Globaphiles, Globaphobes and Globacritics

Whilst the two terms, globalphiles and globaphobes characterize the two extreme positions, it is however important to understand that there are many more varied reactions and interpretations to globalisation. Castells (1999, cited in Coronado 2003:10) constructs a reaction to the process of globalisation in three ways: “‘globaphiles’ who favour globalization, as a legitimising identity; ‘globaphobes’ who oppose globalization, as a resistance identity and the critics of neo-liberal globalisation, as a project identity”. Coronado sees legitimising identity as the ways in which dominant institutions and structures legitimise, rationalise and normalise their reality, which is linked to the global neo-liberal project as a position of the globaphiles. The globaphobes he continues to argue, have constructed a resistant ideology which is “‘produced by those actors who are in a position/conditions of being devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination’ whose survival is entrenched in domination” (Coronado, 2003: 9). The “globacritics”, he further argues have a project identity, which seeks to redefine their position in society and seeks overall structural transformation.

Neoliberalism, Rejectionism, Reformism and Transformism

Scholte (2005) identifies four main responses to globalisation as above. He argues that the neoliberals who believe in the concept of free and unregulated markets have used the opportunities of globalisation, to trade unhindered and largely unrestricted in a world stage, with disastrous consequences for some parts of the world, based on the “Washington Consensus”.

“According to neoliberalist tenets, globalization should be approached with large-scale removal of official interventions in the market, especially through measures of liberalization, deregulation, privatisation and fiscal constraint. This policy package has often been termed ‘the Washington Consensus’” (Scholte 2005:10).

This view of Neoliberalism has over time been presented as policy orthodoxy and is widely seen as “commonsense”. This is in contrast to the position of what Scholte classes as the rejectionists who have come to the conclusion that globalisation is largely used as a vehicle for neoliberalist projects with “calamitous consequences”. “For these critics, globality is by its very nature deeply and unacceptably unsafe, unjust, undemocratic and unsustainable” (Scholte 2005:41). He states that the rejectionists have gone to the extent of calling for “De-globalisation” and are also called the anti-globalists. He further argues that:

“Like rejectionists, reformists oppose neoliberalist globalisation for inflicting major cultural, ecological, economic and psychological harms. However in contrast to rejectionists, reformists affirm that a more global world is here to stay, and they seek to redirect globalization more positively on non-marketist lines. (Scholte, 2005: 43)

Transformists, Scholte (2005) goes on to argue, do not necessarily seek to reform existing global structures of oppression; to the contrary, they propose radical changes that dismantle rationalism and capitalism.

These views offer us insights into a range of perceptions and reactions to globalisation; whether the process is perceived as a force of good or evil. It can be argued that whether globalisation is construed as a force of good or evil is, in the eyes of the beholder, based on our individual experiences. What is significant, at this juncture in advancing our thesis, is the importance for youth workers to begin building their theory, based on their personal, professional and or academic encounters, before they can effectively engage in Global Youth Work. Global Youth Work, I would argue, is rooted in the pursuit of social justice and this stance in itself is not value free; it is rooted in youth workers’ construction of social reality.

Global Youth Work is also based on working with young people to deconstruct their reality, to provoke what Freire (1972) calls critical consciousness. It is however important from the above exposé to note that three broad positions can be identified: those who support globalisation based on its neoliberal orientation, premised on the basis of a free market; those who opposed it on the same basis and the third in the middle; those who accept its potential but reject some of the ways it is used so far. Scholte (2005) calls this term “reformist” and Coronado (2003) conceptualises it under the term “Globacritics”.

The multiple reactions to globalisation discussed above highlights the number of ways in which people experience globalisation; mainly those who are served well by the process and those who bear the brunt of its excesses. This machinery is the very basis on which global inequality is built. As I have argued elsewhere (Sallah 2008b), understanding the unequal nature of this process and developing resistance/practice (within the remit of global Youth Work) is beyond just the moral and green imperatives; it is inextricably linked to the survival of Western societies, especially in relation to security and economics. Napoleon (2008) in her book *Rogue Economics*, states that Indonesia, China and India have more than doubled university enrolment; China in 2010 would have graduated more PhDs in Science and Engineering than the US. From 2001- 2006, US employment in the information sector declined by 17%, jobs in accounting and book-keeping declined by 4% and computer systems declined by 9% . This demonstrates the gradual but colossal shifts in the global economic tectonic plates which then reconfigures the positioning of young people in the UK not only economically in terms of jobs and cost of living but also dominance in other areas like culture, technology and politics. The fact that until recently, three quarters of the most serious plots investigated by the British authorities have links to al-Qaeda in Pakistan (Brown 2008, online), and linked to conflicts in other Muslim lands; suggest that there is a need to engage with this area of work with young people. For example to work with a young Muslim dissatisfied with the political process, on the basis of British foreign policy, requires a deep understanding of the construction of the Islamic Ummah and how this connects with the five faces of globalisation and the personal, local, national and global links.

A critical understanding of globalisation allows us to see that there are inextricable links between the personal, local, national and global and that to talk about young Black people or

young Muslims for example, requires us to understand their fluid and multiple identities in an increasingly globalised world. Most Black people and their descendents are here in the UK largely due to neoliberal policies that sought to recruit the cheapest labour to maximise profit according to the dictates of the market. As discussed in detail in the last chapter, immigration was encouraged in Britain due to the labour shortage in post war Britain in the late 40s and early 60s and restricted in the late 60s when this was not the most viable route anymore; this built on of what Nkrumah (1965) characterises neo-colonial machinations; the last stages of imperialism. The consequence remains that some Black young people are both for example Nigerian and British; this split identity means that the realities they construct for themselves and are constructed for them can at times be polarised, especially in the manner that the process of globalisation has conquered space, time and distance. In my research with Black young people (Sallah 2008a; Howson and Sallah 2010), Black young people and some of their parents often speak of continuities and discontinuities in relation to struggles being linked to the politics of back home and this is brought closer in their ability to watch live TV from “home” and talk instantaneously on Skype.

This needs to also take into consideration the fact that the globaphiles and their neoliberal approach to global capitalism continue to strip developing countries off their ability to take care of their citizenry. This is typified by the young men from Sub-Saharan Africa who coined the mantra “Barca or Berserk” (symbolising an attempt to either get into Barcelona or die trying). These, mostly young men, attempt to cross the Atlantic Ocean in little boats, akin to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, congested and from their reality without choice, in what can at times be defined as suicide missions. What type of desperation tempts these people to make these perilous journeys? A renowned Senegalese DJ perhaps provides an insight into the reasoning in one of his songs:

“You had promised me that I would have the job
You had promised me that I would never be hungry
You had promised me of true activities and a future
Really up to here I still see nothing
That's why I decided to flee, that's why I break myself
In (a) dugout canoe
I swear it! I can't stay here one more second.
It is better to die than to live in such conditions, in this Hell” (DJ Awadi, online)

Again a critical understanding of the process of globalisation would demonstrate that a great many young people from developing countries continue to come to the West, which puts pressure on public services in the UK but at the same time devaluates their skills once in the West. The impact on young British and *Immigrant Citizens* is that the squeeze on public services can be attributed, as popularised in the Sunday tabloids, as the fault of asylum seeker, refugee and immigrant “scroungers”, which as a consequence subject these people largely to hostility; that is for those who are able to even make it. The unequal process of globalisation; propped up by neoliberalist ideologies of globalisation continues to dictate the movement of labour from the South to the North; for example the recruitment of doctors and nurses from developing countries for which the UK has come under criticism. For example, 16,000 nurses, most of whom from developing countries, came into the UK in 2001/2002, a figure that exceeded the number of home trained nurses that year (Buchan 2004; Coombes 2005). For those who are unlucky, they continue to be underemployed or get submerged in the illegal underground economy.

In relation to young Muslims, the concept of the Ummah, which literally signifies the universal brotherhood or nation of oneness, means that young Muslims, in constructing their realities, do not only see themselves as British nationals but as part of a universal brotherhood; therefore the struggles in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan affect them as much as these nationals in their constructed identities; at least at the emotional levels. Muhammad Sadique Khan, one of the 7/7 bombers in his suicide video, said that “We are at war and I am a soldier” and that his actions were motivated by the policies of Western governments “who perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world” (You Tube online); and he further makes reference to the “oppression” of Muslims in other lands as his reason d’être. Whilst some might interpret his rationale as twisted; it illustrates the ways in which global identities can be constructed by some people. In my research with young Muslims and African Heritage Muslims (Sallah 2007b; 2011b); I came across the view that their struggle was not only local or national; but strongly linked to the concept of the Ummah and of oneness with those in other lands that are perceived to be oppressed. In these instances, this has lead to great frustration but not necessarily an invocation of violence as in the case of Muhammad Sadique Khan. There are more complexities in the intersectional factors in their lives including race, national origin, gender and other variables; however the impact of

globalisation on their lives needs to be understood in an era of conquered space, time and distance; and how these affect constructed identities. The point being advanced here is that globalisation has brought the world closer and has become a vehicle for young Muslims to construct a universal identity based on the concept of the Ummah in a way that was not possible before and to engage in work in this area, requires grasping these fundamentals.

Rightly or wrongly, some of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been construed as a part of the American neoliberal agenda of globalisation; and some groups including anarchist and religious fundamentalist like Hisbo Tariya wage a global struggle against the global capitalist project. Whilst these might be more organised resistances; I have come across, in my research, other ways in which young Muslims resist the dominant project of globalisation, which are not only limited to economics but culture as well as the anti-Islamisation project in Europe. In my research and analysis, young people resist in a number of ways, including growing the long beard for young men and dressing in traditional Muslim clothes, women wearing the hijab even when they are not very religious as a sign of protest against the system that dares tell them not to. Taking educational journeys in Islamic countries was highlighted as one of many strategies adopted by the African Heritage Muslim community in Leicester below:

“Three examples of resistance advanced include: individual members of the African heritage Muslim communities taking the initiative to translate the *kutba* into English where this is done in a language that African heritage Muslims do not understand to promote access and inclusivity. Related to the pointed of access and inclusivity, members of the African Heritage communities also prevailed upon mosque committees to invite speakers who could preach in English as well as doing *nasiha* in languages other than the spoken languages in those specific mosques. Young people especially spoke of not letting the politics of the old determine how they interacted with people, especially Muslims from other communities. A number of respondents, especially in the revert focus group spoke of taking it upon themselves to educate themselves about the *deen* through various means and to the extent of going to Arabic countries to learn about true Islam” (Sallah 2011b:33).

It is also worth noting that in the extreme, some Muslims have joined the armed struggle to “free oppressed lands”. A significant new form of resistance is the mass groups joining the mainstream political parties in order to use numerical strength to institute their preferred candidates to flex political muscles as in the case of the Labour party in Tower Hamlets and Bethnal Green (Haque, 2010; The Mail Online 2010).

For a lot of Black young people I have also come across in my research and practice, there are different forms of resistance to globalisation and its associated consequences. These range from the implications of the “Barca or Berserk” mantra highlighted earlier to setting up of youth groups to counter issues like unemployment in developing countries (Sallah, A., 2006), to young people in the UK doing well in school in spite of the barriers placed in their way. The more sinister of these resistances are the young people engaging in the illegal informal economy and organised gangs which can at times have criminal tendencies. The resistance can also be in the form of music especially through hip-hop (lyrics, lifestyle and fashion) and young people led self-help projects. All the above noted resistances highlight the efforts of young people to overhaul what is perceived as a deeply flawed process of globalisation. Global Youth Work itself, for some can be construed as a resistance to the excesses of capitalism; Oxfam (2006 online) speak of the need to be morally outraged in articulating the concept of global citizenship and further go on to argue that:

“The lives of children and young people are increasingly shaped by what happens in other parts of the world. Education for Global Citizenship gives them the knowledge, understanding, skills and values that they need if they are to participate fully in ensuring their own, and others’, well-being and to make a positive contribution, both locally and globally”.

Global Youth Work

Globalisation, as a process, continues to affect all human beings in a number of ways including communications, technology; ecology, economics, work organisation, culture and civil society (Beck 2000). In a similar vein, Sallah (2008b) identified the five faces of globalisation as economical, technological, cultural, environmental and political. All of these faces are visited on young people without choice and these considerations, practised informally and based on the principles of youth work, is what GYW is about. Whilst the term GYW was coined in 1995 (Bourn and McCollum, 1995), its prominence has grown in recent times as a distinct way of working with young people, incorporating both the principles of Development Education and youth work. Global Youth Work:

- is concerned with how the concept and process of globalisation impacts on

young people's realities

- is based on the principles of informal education
- promotes consciousness and action
- challenges oppression and promotes social justice
- is located in young people's realities (Bourn and McCollum, 1995; DEA, 2004; Sallah, 2008b).

Terminology and conceptualisation

Whilst in the field of youth work, this concept is largely known as Global Youth Work (Sallah 2009a; Cotton 2009); related ideas have gone by many other names, such as Global Learning, or Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). *Dare to Stretch* (2009) states that this aspect of working with young people to address the global dimension is called Global Youth Work in Northern Ireland, England and Scotland; Development Education in Youth Work and Global Justice in Youth Work in Ireland and Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in Wales.

As already argued (Sallah 2009a; 2008c), Development Education is the umbrella term used in the field and according to Bourn (2008:1) this term “first emerged during the 1970s, in part in response to the growth of development and aid organisations and the decolonisation process” as well as through the influence of UNESCO and the United Nations (Bourn 2008). As demonstrated in my research (Sallah, 2009a) the terminology used to define the work is inextricably linked to its conceptualisation. The term Active Global Citizenship is largely used within the field of formal teacher training and the term Development Education largely used within the international non-government/ charity organisations but even within this arena there are differences. Some organisations, such as the British Red Cross, use the term Humanitarian Education, whilst the common term used in Wales is Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC); the former addresses the International Humanitarian Law and education agenda, whilst the latter focuses on the combined agenda of global citizenship and sustainable development education. I delivered two staff training days separately for Oxfam and Y Care in 2010, to support them critically reflect on the work they carry out with young people around global issues. It is interesting to note that Oxfam labelled its work “Campaign Work” which focused on a preset agenda and fundraising; and Y Care

call its work around these issues outside the UK “Youth Focused International Development”.

Whilst some of these terminologies and conceptualisations might be similar to Global Youth Work, the divergence exists because Global Youth Work is based on youth work principles (the distinctiveness of youth work was covered in the introductory chapter) which centre on an informal approach based on experiential learning, mostly revolving around the voluntary engagement of young people as well as “tipping the balance of power in young people’s favour” (Young 2006; Davies 2005) in contrast to the development education approach which sometimes has an explicit campaign agenda linked to it, for example raising funds as in the case of Oxfam highlighted earlier. Global Youth Work therefore, whilst retaining most of Development Education’s principles, is in addition grounded in youth work principles, with the basis of starting from the young people’s agenda and experiences. The Development Education Association (DEA) articulates this difference very well in the following quotation:

Global youth work is a form of development education. However, what makes global youth work distinct is that it *starts from young people’s own perspectives and experiences and develops a negotiated agenda for learning*. Global youth work also focuses primarily on the impact of globalisation in the UK and overseas rather than education about the *development and underdevelopment* of countries. Although it shares many of the values and principles that underpin good youth work, development education often has its own agenda from the outset, linked to specific campaigns or concerns and has historically taken place in more formal educational settings (DEA, 2004: 28; original emphasis).

Global Youth Work Conceptual Models

Recently, there have been a range of attempts to conceptualise Global Youth Work. Woolley (2009) (Figure 1) conceptualises Global Youth Work as the coming together of three different components for it to effectively happen: global issues, global perspectives and global experiences. He argues that effective Global Youth Work must see these three dimensions in interaction. The DEA’s (2010) model (Figure 2) emphasises the 3 Cs: Connect, Challenge and Change. This approach sees Global Youth Work seeking to first connect with young people on issues relevant to them, challenging the certainties of young people and hopefully changing their outlook to life. My conceptual model (Figure 3) of Global Youth

Work (Sallah 2011a) places young people at the centre and in constant interaction with the five faces and at the personal, local, national and global to the extent that any issue can be located within this matrix. The commonality of all these three models is that the process of engagement starts from where young people are at and develops from the personal to the global.

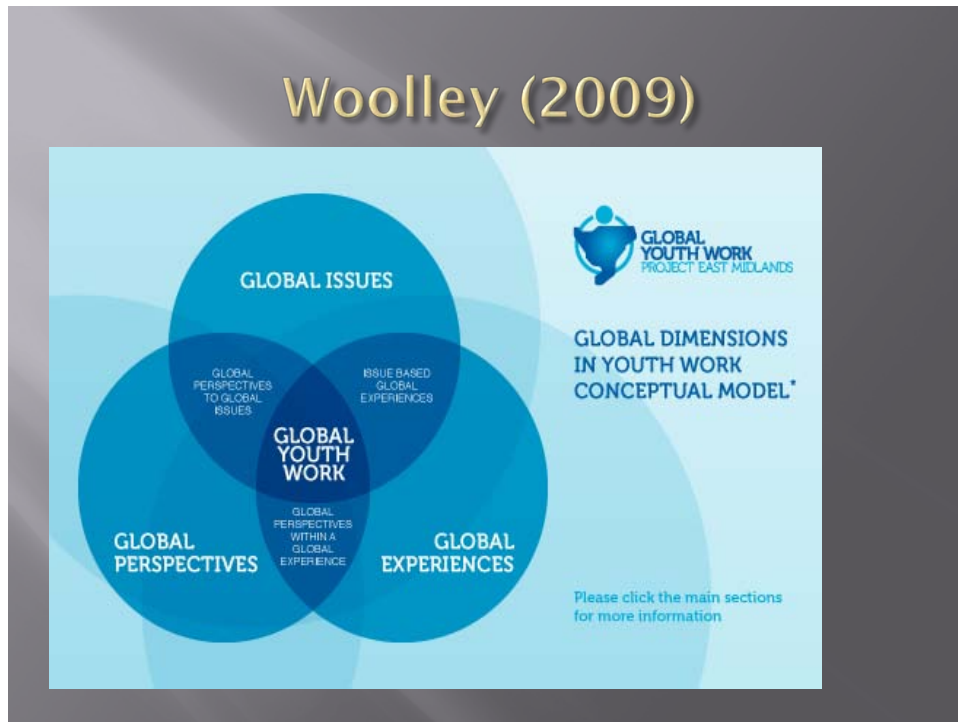


Figure 1

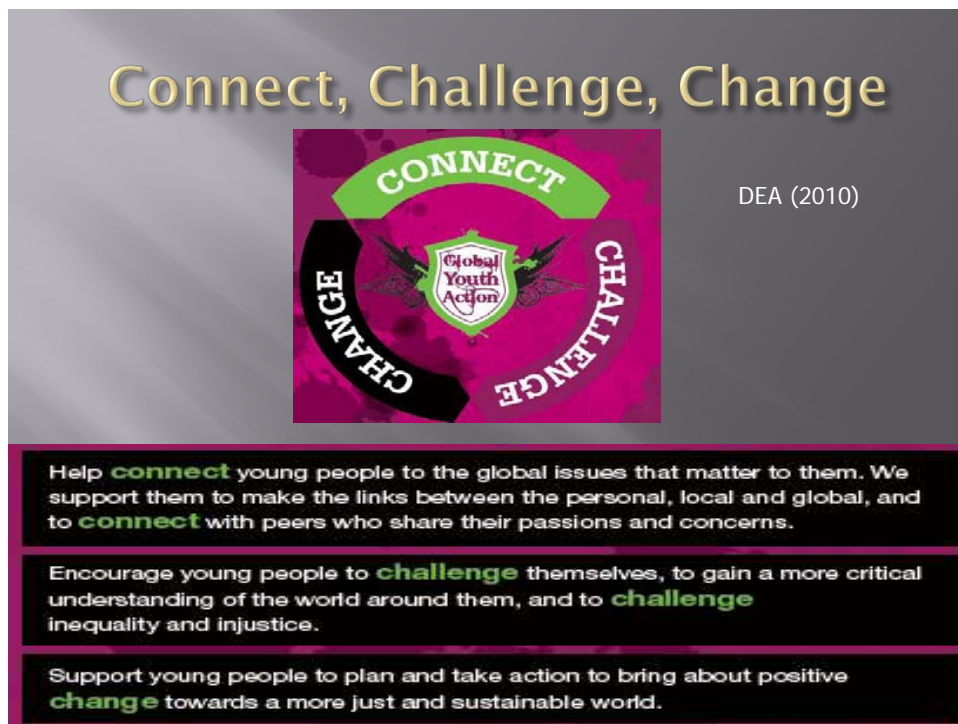


Figure 2

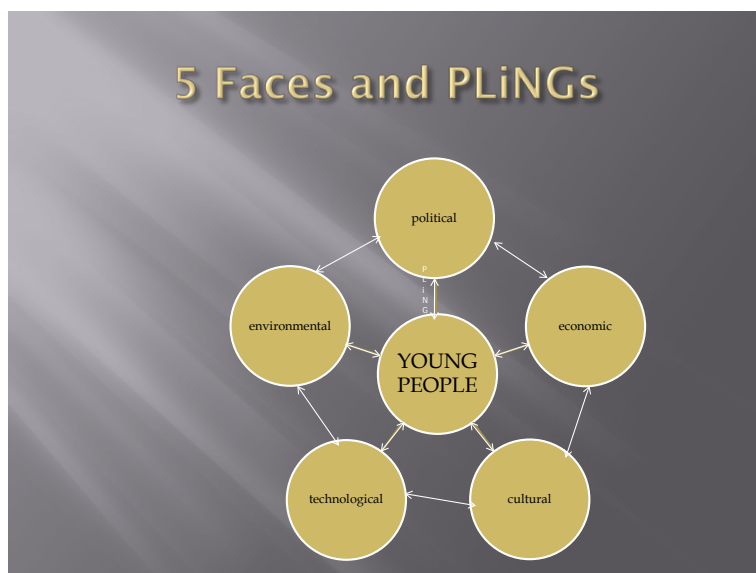


Figure 3

The author's contribution to knowledge

I have conducted one of most comprehensive research to date in relation to the training of youth workers in the youth work field with regards to how the global dimension is conceptualised and operationalised.

There has been some recent research around Global Youth Work, specifically for example Cotton (2009) who mapped out Global Youth Work in the non-formal sector for the DEA. It concluded that “Youth Work is an excellent vehicle for the delivery of global education and that through Global Youth Work; youth workers can meet a range of mainstream and societal outcomes” (Cotton, 2009: 2). An Ipsos MORI Research Study on behalf of Development Education Association (DEA) (2008) explored young people’s experiences of global learning and concluded that over 50% of the sample interviewed have experienced global learning over the previous year whilst 78% felt that schools can help students to understand how they can “make the world a better place”.

Most of the research conducted in this area, however, has been within the field of teacher training (see for example Shiel and Jones 2004; Scott-Baumann et al. 2003; Martin 2004; Robins et al. 2003; Davies et al. 2004). As already reported in Sallah (2009a), two exceptions to these are Lashley (1998) and Joseph (2005). Both of these studies attempted to find out how GYW is covered in English HEIs which deliver youth and community work courses. Lashley (1998) examined 15 institutions, out of whom 60% offered GYW sessions, although most of these were one-off sessions, with little opportunity to explore the global dimension in any meaningful depth. The study by Joseph (2005) looked at nine institutions and concluded that GYW is understood differently by different HEIs. This suggests that one HEI might be covering the issue in a way that raises the political consciousness of future youth workers, and at the same time another might be following curricula that reinforce an understanding of relationships to the global South based on charity and dependency. Both reports conclude that youth and community work courses in England could benefit from more quality resources and external support. My research (Sallah 2009a) went further than these previous studies by involving all four nations of the UK, as well as engaging a wider sample. *Dare to Stretch* (2009) has also recently looked at how Development Education is promoted in youth and community work courses in the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland. This research report recommended the incorporation of the global dimension in youth worker training and explored issues of resources and placement. This report also acknowledged my

preliminary research report on *The State of Global Youth Work in British HEIs* (Sallah 2008c).

My research presented in this overview included interviews with 43 of the 50 institutions in the UK delivering JNC or equivalent qualifications. The research strategy included interviewing 43 module or course leaders in the said institutions, interviewing 28 recent YCD graduates as well as undertaking a focus group with key representatives of the HEI sector, statutory and voluntary sectors. The research (Sallah 2008c; 2009a) contributed empirical knowledge relating to the state of global youth work in British HEIs in the following ways:

1. The terminology used in British HEIs delivering JNC or equivalent qualifying courses is not uniform; on the contrary it is diverse and often linked to conceptualisations that are, in turn, informed by organisational and philosophical values.
2. Whether or not trainee youth workers are taught the global dimension in their courses is something of a lottery, as about half of the HEIs interviewed did not cover it explicitly or in any meaningful way. Additionally about half of the institutions were not sure about what the curriculum content should be.
3. The motivation of lecturers to deliver the global dimension varies with the key factor being the motivations of the individual members of staff. Even though a number of policy imperatives and validation requirements make it essential (NYA 2007; LLUK 2008; QAA 2009 & DFES 2005); by and large this does not appear to motivate lecturers to deliver it.
4. In relation to pedagogy, the research found that a significant amount of institutions lack the required skills, knowledge and resources to effectively deliver the global dimension.
5. The research also highlighted the complexities of how the global dimension can be given prominence throughout validation processes.

These findings contribute to knowledge in a field that is relatively young and greatly under-researched. This research was supported by the DEA and the East Midlands Global Youth Work Network and a national conference has already been held (November 2008), bringing together some of the key players in the field from the HEI, statutory and voluntary sector to

discuss the research findings. It is cardinal at this stage to reflect on some of theoretical concepts influencing my work, as identified in the introductory chapter.

Freire's concept (1972) of critical consciousness has greatly influenced my thinking around Global Youth Work praxis.

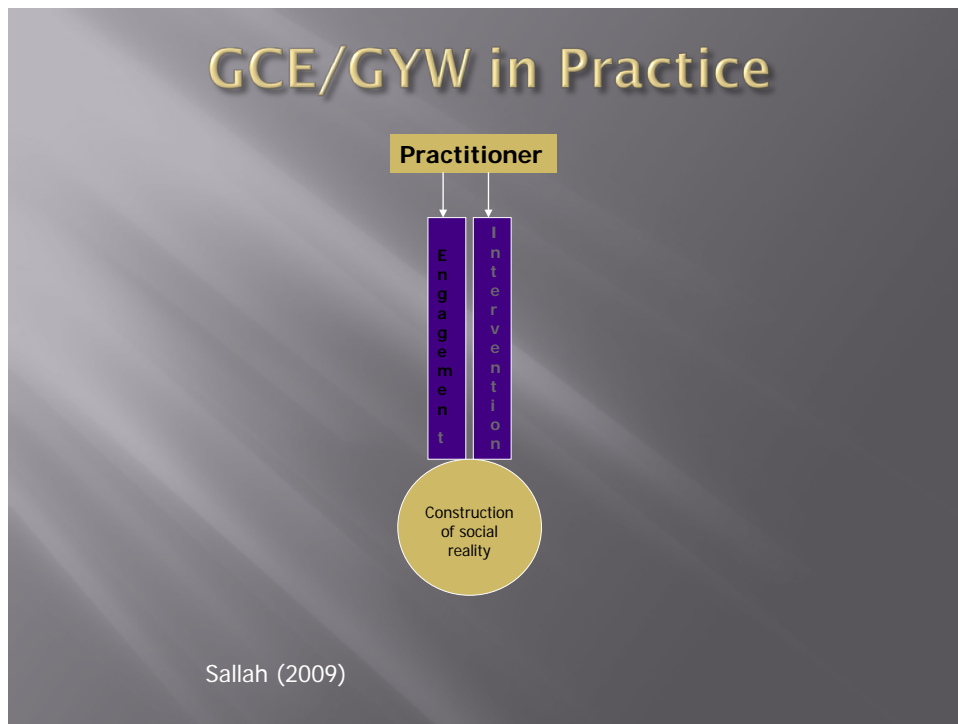


Diagram A

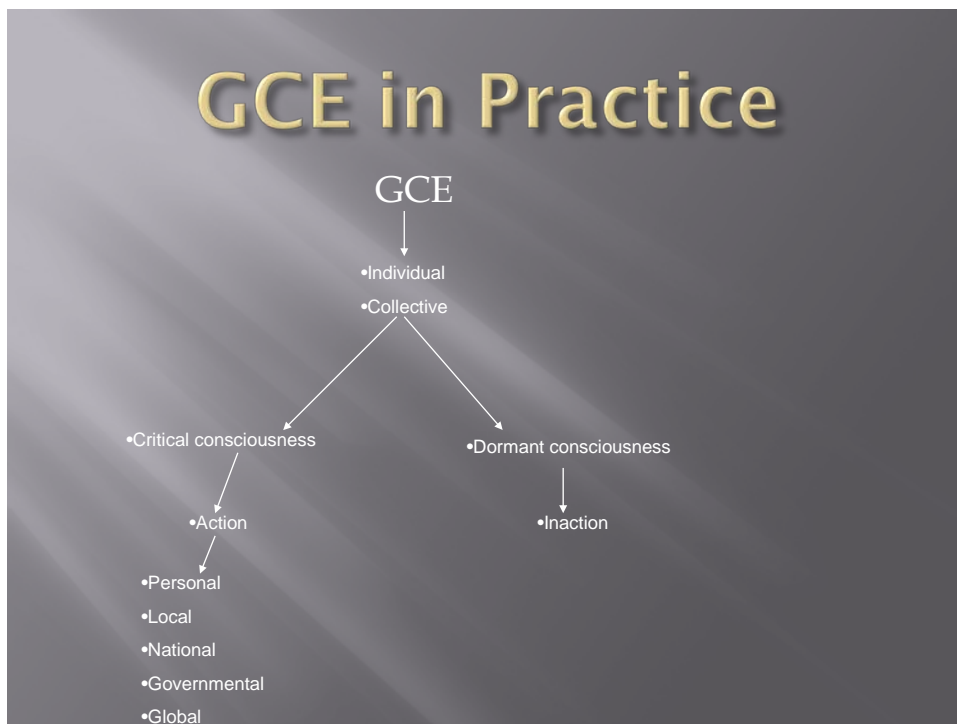


Diagram B

The two diagrams A and B above illustrate my thinking and how Freire influences it. In diagram A, I present the role of the practitioner/youth worker in either intervening or engaging the young person to deconstruct and reconstruct their reality as a site of struggle. This is linked to Freire’s premise that oppression is based on a false consciousness; in this case a false consciousness of how inequality and neoliberal orthodoxy are normalised. In the second diagram, I explain how a dialogical and mutual process of engagement, that negates the banking concept of education, where the youth worker acts as an external catalyst to the oppressed reality of the young people, is involved in provoking consciousness. This consciousness, can either be critical, what Freire calls critical transivity or what I call dormant consciousness, where the young person gets the information or knowledge but is not yet able to locate it in their reality possibly due to what Freire (1972) calls “fear of freedom” or the different pieces of the jigsaw not yet coming together. Freire’s contribution to my thinking is essential, as I have gone on to adapt and apply his thinking in my work.

In the same vein, my approach to leaning is influenced by the Participatory Action Research approach to generating knowledge; which sees the researcher and the researched as both contributors of knowledge; by the same logic, my praxis recognises the existing knowledge

that young people have and seeks to engage them in a libratory and dialogical approach to education where both learner and student are mutual producers and consumers of knowledge; as well as utilising methodological approaches of engagement that starts from where they are, on the basis of voluntary engagement in line with the distinct approach of youth work discussed in the introductory chapter.

The intersecting and multiple identities that are constructed for young people as well as the ones they construct for themselves have been significant, especially in exploring variables like religion, class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location; for example to understand the constructed identities of young Muslims requires us to understand the global impact of the Muslim Ummah, their constructed identities as Black British or Asian British as well as in which part of the world they are located and how neoliberal projections of globalisation impact on them. These constructed realities are the domains of Global Youth Work and deciphering the multiple and fluid identities in an age of globality are of great urgency.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have located my work on Global Youth Work, its application within HEIs and its potential contribution to knowledge. This has been carried out by initially looking at the concept and process of globalisation and demonstrating how the interconnectedness of the world has special relevance for the lives of young people, and therefore for the preparation of informal educators who will work with young people. This was taken forward by looking at Global Youth Work and my contributions in carrying out the most extensive research to date in relation to how global learning for youth work is understood and operationalised within HEIs in the UK.

Chapter 4

Listening to the voices of young Muslims: towards culturally competent praxis?

Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the issues that confront young Muslims in Britain in relation to negotiation of identity and socialisation processes. The chapter begins by exploring Muslims generally and young Muslims in particular, covering Muslims and deprivation, perceptions of Muslims as well as young Muslims' negotiation of identity in relation to being Muslim and being British. A range of other variables of intersectionality including gender, ethnicity and social deprivation will also be explored. It then moves on to explore the government's counter-terror agenda, the rationale for its design and the impact of its implementation. The chapter then concludes by reviewing and locating my contribution in the field of working

with young Muslims and the perceived barriers they face in their daily interactions with the structures of society.

Muslims and young Muslims

The population of Muslims in Europe has risen dramatically over the last five decades, due largely to significant migration since after the Second World War as well as the faster reproduction rates of Muslims in comparison with other sections of the settled population. Of all faith groups, Muslim households were more likely to contain children, with 63% containing at least one dependent child and one in four containing three or more children in comparison with 14% Sikh households, 7% of Hindu and 5% of Christian households (Malik et al. 2007). Whilst the initial Muslims to settle in the UK post Second World War were little pockets of migrants; this has drastically increased especially over the last decade when their descendents, mainly second, third and fourth generations (Ansari 2002), who are, legally speaking, citizens, have been faced with the problem of practising their faith in a state that does not necessarily recognise their different needs.

There are 1.6 million Muslims in the UK and 73% are of South Asian origin. Overall 43% of Muslims are Pakistani, 16% of Bangladeshi, 8% of Indian and 6% of other Asian ethnic origins. Other Muslims in the UK include Arab, Afghan, Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish, Kosovan, African (including especially North African, West and East Africans and Somali Muslims). Forty six percent of Muslims were born in the UK, 18% in Pakistan, 9% in Bangladesh, 9% in Africa and 3% in Turkey. It is also significant to note that 90% of people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin in the UK are Muslim (Census 2001; Reed 2005; ONS 2005). In relation to the spatial concentration of Muslims – 38% lived in London, 14% in the West Midlands, 13% in the North West, and 12% in Yorkshire and Humber. Additionally it is worth noting that Muslims made up 8% of the London population (ONS 2005; Reed 2005). Of particular significance in relation to this chapter is the fact that one third of Muslims are aged under 16 in comparison to one fifth of the overall population (Census 2001). This figure rises to 38% for those of Pakistani origin and 35% for Bangladeshi origin.

Muslims and deprivation

IPRD (2009) argues that a “social contract” exists between every government and its citizens. This contract is with all citizens regardless of race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or any other social stratification. It is one that gives citizens opportunities for upward mobility, free from personal and structural discrimination either directly or indirectly. However it is argued that this contract between the British Government and its Muslim citizens has been breached:

“The sheer entrenchment of social exclusion of Muslims in Britain undermines this social contract, and is indelibly linked to the identity crises that render a minority of British Muslims vulnerable to Islamist extremist indoctrination and terrorism recruitment. This therefore illustrates a serious failure at the heart of Government social policy towards its Muslim citizens – and the continued Governmental insistence on addressing British Muslim citizens solely in relation to counter-terrorism is itself symptomatic of this failure. The ‘Prevent’ agenda therefore, to be successful, requires urgent efforts to revitalize the social contract between Government and British Muslims on its own terms.” (IPRD 2009:7)

The deprivation of Muslim communities has been documented by numerous social commentators (see for example Bunglawala et al., 2004; Briggs et al. 2006; Yunas et al., 2007; Malik et al 2007; Ahmed 2009). However, it is worth noting that “disentangling the roots of social exclusion of UK Muslims is difficult given the close correlation between faith and social class and ethnic minority factors” (Reed 2005:3). It is important at this point to revisit the theory of intersectionality discussed in the introductory section and in all the other chapters. This is pivotal in analysing the constructed identity of Muslims in a UK context, where it is solely hooked on a religions dimension; the intersectionality of their religious identity, their social deprivation for the majority, and their national/ethnic origins are important in understanding the intersectionality and cumulative effect of their social and self constructions. It is further imperative to note that data gathered on Muslims could be more comprehensive; however the available picture reveals a scenario of disadvantage. I would like to illustrate the significance of the theory of intersectionality in understanding how an interactive process exists between the constructed religious identity of Muslims and social deprivation for the significant majority. In relation to the picture of Muslims and deprivation, the unemployment rate for Muslims aged 16-24 is 17.5% in comparison with 7.9% for Christians and 7.4% for Hindus (Reed 2005; Census 2001). In 2003-4, about a third of Muslims of working age had no qualifications (ONS 2004) and 69% of British Muslims of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin live in poverty compared to 20% of white people (IPRD 2009). Two-thirds of Muslim children of South Asian origins are impoverished (IPRD 2009); CRE (2007) puts this at 60% of Pakistani and 72% of Bangladeshi origin children. With a

diverse sample of 1125 respondents and using questionnaire surveys, qualitative interviews and case studies, Merali et al. found that 80% of sampled Muslims in Britain had experienced discrimination compared to only 45% in the late 1990s (Merali et al. 2004). Situating the constructed religious identity of Muslims in relation to this context of deprivation is important; not to pathologize by any stretch of the imagination but to understand the multiplicity of variables that intersect and how these ultimately impact on constructed identities. Analysis of data presented above and earlier reveals that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African/Caribbean young people remain in some of the poorest households; additionally these three groups remain some of the lowest achievers educationally; however whilst Indian and Chinese children are ethnic minorities, they however continue to be high educational achievers. Apart from the African/Caribbean group (and even for this group, the overwhelming majority of Somalis are Muslims as well as an increasing number of this group who are not Somalis), over 90% of British of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are Muslims. Why then is it that these groups, apart from having religion as a common denominator, share disproportionate educational underachievement and social deprivation? This point requires deeper analysis but prima facie evidence seems to suggest that there is a correlation between being Muslim and these associated factors.

Whilst some of the reasons advanced for the radicalisation of young Muslims have been linked to underachievement and deprivation, it is worth observing that in relation to those who carried out the 7/7 bombings, “three of the four men were educated to degree level and all were from middle class backgrounds” (Reed 2005:1). The Government (FCO/Home Office 2004) in this light recognises that extremist organisations like Al-Mujahiroun have two types of targets: those educated to degree level and largely from middle class families and those from deprived backgrounds mostly subjected to underachievement. Whichever background one is from, the fact remains that Muslims form part of the most deprived communities in the UK, and this cannot be taken from the equation when working with young Muslims. These deprivations have structural roots that do not exist in a vacuum; to address their source of disaffection is to understand the structural causes and impact of deprivation.

Perceptions of Muslims

YouGov (2006) found an increase in the number of British non Muslims who believe that British Muslims are willing to carry out or condone acts of terrorism with no sense of loyalty to Britain from 10 % to 18% a year after the events of 7th July. Research commissioned by the Greater London Authority (2007) evidences disproportionate negative media representation of Muslims; the report that looked at media coverage within a week found that 91% was negative both in tone and content. Moore, Mason & Lewis (2008) found that two-thirds of British Muslim coverage revolves around Muslims being portrayed as a threat, linked to terrorism, or a problem (in relation to being managed in social and public spaces). There is often a perceived threat that most Muslims want to introduce Sharia law, and if necessarily through violent means; however whilst between 30 and 40% of Muslims would support the introduction of some aspects of Sharia Law (Hennessy and Kite 2006, cited in IPRD 2009), IPRD (2009) postulates that there is no causal link between Sharia Law and terrorist attacks and therefore the two should not be conflated. This is even more pertinent given that:

“Every major Islamist terrorist plot in the UK, including 7/7, the fertiliser bomb plot, the liquid bomb plot, and so on, have been linked to al-Muhajiroun. Both Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shahzad Tanweer (the lead 7/7 bombers) had been al-Muhajiroun members, as had others convicted in relation to different plots.” (IPRD 2009:5)

The problem is then not the general Muslim population, but only the membership of a small and extremist religious-political organisation, specifically the Al-Muhajiroun, who have now been proscribed under British law. It should however be noted that Al-Mujahiroun, like al-Qaeda, was used by the British and American Intelligence agencies like MI6 and the CIA as a proxy in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan with support and training being provided (IPRD 2009). The pivotal point to be made here is that there is often a negative perception of Muslims, especially after the events of 7/7 when radical shifts of the conceptualisation of terrorism took place; from its perception of foreign made to a home grown branding. This has lead to increased tensions in young people’s construction of identity. It is this stage in life when they are neither children nor adults, where young people have to search and answer the essential question of self (Young 2006) that they have to deal with the extra burden of rejection, stigmatisation and alienation. This is often in addition to other layers of multiple oppression: of being a visible ethnic minority, of being more likely to be from a deprived community and of being more likely to be drawn into mistreatment within the criminal justice

system. This point has been raised in my research (Sallah 2007b:103) as a “potential for triple oppression”.

Negotiation of identity

“The combination of social exclusion and institutional discrimination affecting a majority of Muslim communities in Britain contributes to a general collective sense of marginalisation, disenfranchisement, and disenchantment: a sense of being excluded from civil society, which thus exacerbates the experience of a separate or segregated identity to mainstream Britain. This sense of civic exclusion is reinforced primarily by a perception of blocked social mobility and discrimination...” (IPRD 2009, online).

Sen (2006, cited in Ahmed 2009: 49) talks about the “miniaturisation of people’ which has potentially long term damaging effects in that it ignores the “intricacies of plural groups and multiple loyalties”. Muslims are not a homogeneous group with one collective identity but a complexity of national, cultural, ethnic and sect variables; these variables and their intersectionality must be understood. Additionally Modood (2003) argues that a Muslim dimension to majority-minority relations was only introduced around the 1990s as prior to its introduction, they were conceptualised only in terms of “colour racism”. Consequently the same legal and policy framework still operates from the conceptualisation of “racial dualism”. Making a departure from this “racial dualism” where the binary is Black or White; to incorporate religion and other aspects, requires us to understand, not only how ethnicity and culture impacts on Muslims, but also how the religion of Islam is central to the identity of Muslims. The shift from a British Asian identity in the late 1990s to an emphasis on a British Muslim one is a case in hand.

Whilst the common denominator remains their connection to the Islamic Ummah, the other variables should be given sufficient attention in the construction of their identity; and in addition the interaction of these variables. Notwithstanding this cardinal point, the construction of religious identity is featuring significantly in Muslims’ conceptualisation and construction of the self.

Religion is very important in the construction of Muslim identities (O’Beirne, 2004, cited in Reed 2005). A FOIS (2005) survey of 466 respondents concluded that they continued to be proud of both being Muslim and British but there is a growing feeling of unease and discomfort due to being tagged “guilty by association” – this rose by 400% after the attacks. Seventy-seven percent of Muslims strongly identified to being British in comparison to half

of the British population (Gallup 2009). A host of similar studies (ONS 2007; Hutnik 1985, cited in Choudhury 2007; PEW 2006; Sporton et al. 2006) have found that Muslims, especially young Muslims, are increasingly placing a greater premium in how religion contributes to shaping their identity. Malik et al. (2007: 8) with a sample of 1398 respondents found that "... Islam was not a separate part of their identity but integral and interwoven into all other issues and aspects of their lives".

Given this scenario, it is worth contrasting this with the competency of mainstream providers. The Teacher Training Agency's (TTA) (2005) annual survey of graduates found that only 27% of graduates felt prepared to teach English as an additional language whilst only 35% felt that they have been adequately prepared to teach children from ethnic minority backgrounds. In a survey (MORI 2005), 18% of respondents, 229, said that Islam is not compatible with British democracy. In the same report 77% of Muslim respondents, compared to 55% of non Muslims, think that Muslims should be able to set up their own faith schools. Muslims were also less likely to agree that schools and employers should have the power to ask Muslims in their employment or school to remove headscarves. In a similar vein:

"Clients and volunteers expressed concerns and doubts about the lack of awareness displayed by mainstream services about the faith and cultural sensitivities of Muslim clients. This was mirrored by frustration with Muslim communities and lack of support infrastructure..." (Malik et al., 2007:8).

Halstead (2005) identified a range of services that were not being met in post-16 Education including the need for Muslim chaplains and counselling services, availability of halal food, being sensitive to prayer times during examinations, being sensitive to Islamic beliefs and practices and a lack of policies and procedures to deal with Islamophobia. Ofsted (2005) found poor practices, for example of learners and staff not being aware of prayer rooms as well as inadequate washing facilities. This feeling of engaging with culturally inappropriate services is further illustrated in the quotation below:

"Muslim youth do not seem to approach statutory agencies for such issues partly because they feel the service providers do not understand young Muslims, and also because they do not understand the religion, culture and other norms that young Muslims are faced with within their own community structures daily" (Ahmed 2009:27).

We can draw from the above that there is an urgent need to gain the required skills, knowledge and resources to effectively engage with young Muslims, to counter an impending sense of marginalisation, exclusion and alienation. This cultural competence, as I have argued in chapter two, should be a hallmark of a multi-faith, multiracial and multicultural new Britain.

Government's counter terror agenda

“The (UK) Government's analysis of the factors involved in the radicalization processes that have culminated in a minority of British Muslims becoming involved in activities promoting violent extremism is empirically weak and theoretically inconsistent. The Government has increasingly adopted a broad definition of violent extremism, or of the processes, ideas and values conducive to violent radicalization, that threatens to alienate already marginalised Muslim communities from mainstream society” (Institute for Policy Research and Development 2009:1).

Reed (2005) argues that Western policy-makers have been confronted with the question of “what to do” with young Muslims recently and this has been given political resonance in the UK principally by the “Summer of Unrest” (these disturbances mainly between white youths and those of South Asian origin in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford), and London bombings of July 2005 which has posed an urgent question of “what to do” with young Muslims.

However it has been argued that concerns were earlier raised about Islam in the West after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the furore that erupted following Salman Rushdie's release of the *Satanic Verses* in 1989 (Ansari 2002); the argument advanced is premised on the basis that these incidents for the first time mobilised people not on ethnic and racial lines, but on the basis of religion which holds for its members significance, security and solidarity (Clark 1996). Richie (2001), Cantle (2001) and Ouseley (2001) wrote reports after the civil unrest and identified a number of factors that have resulted in segregation (whether self imposed or structural), division and lack of intersection in the lives of various communities leading to the “Summer of Unrest”. Reed (2005) further identifies that hundreds of people were injured and over £30 million worth of damage caused during the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

The aftermath of 9/11 saw a heightened vigilance against Muslims, but this was largely directed at foreign nationals. However, 7/7 saw terrorist acts carried out by young Muslims born and brought up in the UK, which in the end created the myth of the enemy within (Reed

2005; Bagguley & Hussain 2003; John 2006). It is important to note that some young Muslims, for example the 7/7 bombers, have carried out or attempted to carry out acts of terror in Britain and this cannot be removed from the equation as it poses plausible threats to British society. To ignore this threat tantamount to burying one's head in the sand in the face of serious danger. However the other side of the coin is that media and government rhetoric and policy often conflates Muslims as homogeneous under a category of person under suspicion; important differences (sect, ethnicity, belief, socio-economic position, country of birth, citizenship status, migrant status, gender, age and the intersectionality of these variables) are left out of any analysis and out of any policy-making.

The UK Government's response to this threat has largely been limited to the "Prevent" agenda initially espoused in its CONTEST strategy which was created in early 2003 and updated in March 2009 with the aim "to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence" (HMG 2009:8) through preventing, pursuing, protecting and preparing. This also incorporates the Preventing Extremism Together (PET) strategy, which has as its core objectives:

- To challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices
- To disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places where they operate
- To support individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment or who have already been recruited by violent extremists
- To increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism
- To address the grievances that ideologues are exploiting (HMG 2009:14).

As can be noted from the above objectives, these focus on the disruption of vulnerability to the process of radicalisation. Government policy in this direction as contained in a draft Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Home Office report starts from the premise that:

"Extremism can be a symptom of disaffection, the riots in some northern towns three years ago were another. We need policies to handle the symptoms and limit their impact but the broader task is to address the roots of the problem which include the discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion suffered by many Muslim communities (as by other minorities) (FCO Home Office 2004:4).

Whilst the Government has been explicit, as above, in its acceptance of the causal link between deprivation and vulnerability to radicalisation; its policy rhetoric has not been matched by its articulation and implementation of its “Prevent” agenda as this has led to resentment and further alienation of Muslim communities (Ahmed 2009, IPRD 2009). Some have taken a more critical view of the Government’s involvement which can be argued to be premised on a wrong foundation:

“The Government’s understanding of extremism acknowledges, but inadequately analyses the core social factors behind violent radicalization, seeing these factors as separate and contingent, rather than as mutually interdependent dynamics of a single failed social system that has 1) marginalised the majority of Muslims from British civil society; and 2) facilitated the capacity of Islamist extremists to mobilize on British soil” (Institute for Policy Research and Development 2009, 1-2).

IPRD (2009) present a thesis that a social contract exist between Muslim citizens and the government which has not been upheld by the Government given the evident high level of Muslim deprivation. Instead the government has been focussed on the prevention of violent Muslim extremism through such measures as CONTEST and PET when violent radicalisation should be viewed as “the culmination of a hierarchy of interdependent causes operating as a mutually-reinforcing system, which needs to be addressed holistically, necessitating not just a targeted and focused counterterrorism strategy, but intensified Government efforts to revitalise the social contract with Muslim citizens on its own terms” (IPRD 2009:3)

In addition to the perceived failure of the British Government to uphold its end of the social contract, concerns have been raised that the UK government’s involvement in conflicts overseas, especially in Muslim occupied lands, has angered a lot of young Muslims without the space to oppose Government policy or express legitimate frustrations. Arguably, this has partly been used as a tool to mobilise young Muslims (Sallah 2007b). A joint Foreign Office and Home Office report in 2004 admits that one of the key drivers of young Muslims being open to extremism is:

“a perception of ‘double standards’ in British foreign policy, where democracy is preached but oppression of the ‘Ummah’ (the one nation of believers) is practised or tolerated e.g. Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya; a consequent sense of helplessness over the situation of Muslims generally; the lack of any real opportunities to vent frustrations.” (Gieve 2004, cited in IPRD 2009:5)

Whilst there were attempts to intervene in both Bosnia and Kosovo by the UK government where Muslim populations were suffering and often joined by Muslim jihadists from all over the world, these are often considered minute in the face of what is perceived to be the oppression of the Muslim Ummah in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. Given the above scenario, one is drawn to the conclusion that UK Government's agenda is mainly pre-occupied with tackling the signs and symptoms of violent extremism (this is absolutely important too) without necessarily looking at deep seated deprivations within the Muslim communities as well as not creating the public spaces for legitimate dissent. Consequently there is very little room for legitimate protest in the public sphere to explore both the deprivation of Muslims in the UK as well as the perceived oppression in the Muslim Ummah. Rightly or wrongly, these issues have been used to politically mobilise young Muslims to do something against perceived oppression. Ahmed (2009) captures this frustration in relation to the Government strategies:

“There is a need to examine the use of terminology such as cohesion, Preventing Violent Extremism (PVC) and integration. For many of these terms have become synonymous with the use of social vehicles to achieve political outcomes. As a result many local communities resist (even resent) the terms and therefore may not engage in the discourse.” (Ahmed 2009: 89)

Whilst we have illustrated how the perceived oppression of the Islamic Ummah has been used as a point of political mobilisation against the government's perceived reluctance to put its foreign policy under the microscope, as well as addressing the deep pockets of deprivation within Muslim communities, attempts should continuously be made to engage with young Muslims to give them political stages to voice dissent as citizens. Recalibrations must also be made in relation to their mainly deprived stations in life as well as the capacity of mainstream services to respond to their different cultural and religious needs because these are the factors that ferment structural discrimination. The Government claims to have this strategy of listening to young people as a key cornerstone of its strategy:

“Creating opportunities to engage with and listen to young Muslims is a key part of the Government's work to Prevent Violent Extremism. The direct engagement and active participation of young people in the preventing violent extremism agenda is far more effective than simply engaging with organisations that claim to represent young people, and is crucial in building and sustaining resilient communities (DCLG, 2008, cited in Ahmed, 2009:11).

However evidence points to the contrary (Malik et al. 2007; Ahmed 2009) as a significant number of services remain culturally and religiously insensitive, and the voices of young Muslims largely remain *Seen but not Heard* (Ahmed 2009) as the Policy Research Centre aptly named its latest report.

A conversation with Freire in understanding young Muslims and oppression

We earlier covered Baroness Warsi's views of dinner table acceptance and normalisation of discrimination against Muslims; we could see how the view and sometimes public construction of Muslims has been embedded culturally and structurally into the fabric of society. What Freire's work allows us to see is the extent to which oppression can dehumanise; this is related to Althusser's (1971) thesis of an ideological state apparatus which constructs and interacts with oppressed groups in a particular way, especially in soft-core ideological spaces. This process of discrimination, or oppression to couch it in Freirean parlance, is one that brings both resistance and acceptance. Using this approach, Freire's work has been used to illuminate this didactic relationship within a national context; however I have been able to expand this to the global level, specifically in relation to Muslims and their relationship to the concept of the Ummah.

The author's contribution in this field

Malik et al. (2007) used a sample of 1398 young Muslims based on enquires made through telephone, emails and letters to explore appropriateness of services to young Muslims. The major issues identified in this report are "relationship issues, mental health difficulties, religious concerns, offending and rehabilitation, sexuality and sexual health and abuse" (Malik et al. 2007:8). Other studies in this area are beginning to highlight the plight of young Muslims (Muslim Council of Britain, 2005; Murtuja 2006; Coles 2005; Jawad 2008, Ahmed 2009 and Birmingham City Council 2008). These studies remain mainly exploratory and limited to a small number of dimensions in contrast to the work outlined in this thesis (Sallah 2007b; Sallah 2011c) which looks at most aspects of the young Muslim's life in interacting with mainstream services. My research has one of the largest sample sizes to date and has looked at the whole young person instead of for example young people and housing or young people and employment in isolation. This is important as it is arguably the sense of cumulative disadvantage, of being denied opportunities in not just one sector of social life, but across all sectors and services, that permits a sense that the root of the problem is

religious discrimination in addition to a complex working-through of past and current global economic relationships. The cumulative effect and the intersectionality of these dimensions of ethnicity, class and deprivation amongst others is often left out of the analysis.

Whilst government policy has largely centred on preventing the threat of radicalisation and extremism posed to and by young Muslims (see for example PETs and CONTEST), my research is underpinned by a different set of assumptions and values; it starts from the barriers and factors that alienate and disengage them – principally barriers they face in accessing mainstream services. Additionally the research methodology used (Participatory Action Research) and the cultural/experiential affinity of the young people involved makes the whole process empowering. It has been evidenced that Muslims on average live in more overcrowded housing, are more likely to be unemployed and are also more likely to have left education with fewer GCSEs than the average citizens in the UK. In addition, until recently, Islam had a tiny following, some might even say insignificant but as the second biggest faith demographic after Christianity (third after White/No Religion if that demographic is included) with about 3% of the British population classified as Muslims, this has changed. This increase demands serious attention; not only in relation to their socio-economic status in their country of birth, but more so how accessible mainstream services are in relation to housing, formal and informal education, employment, criminal justice and social services and how culturally competent they feel these services are. I conceptualised, designed and implemented one of the biggest research projects in relation to young Muslims, not only in the UK but across Europe. Using a PAR approach, I worked with some young Muslims, with cultural/experiential affinity to the subject being researched to interview 500 young Muslims from Leicester and Leicestershire, conducted eight focus groups with different groups of young Muslims and one with Muslim parents. It is worth noting that the Leicester Muslim population is diverse (in terms of ethnicities, recent migrant or established migrants, sects, socio-economic experiences) and that is a representativeness that might otherwise be missing. I was also able to conduct eight semi-structured individual interviews with key personalities within the Muslim community in Leicester as well as eight key personalities who lead or deliver mainstream services like the leader of the City Council as well as the lead director for Children and Young People's Services. This yielded key empirical data, which contributed knowledge in a sparsely researched discipline. Specifically, my publications (Sallah 2007b

and Sallah 2011c) provided an insight into what young Muslims regarded as barriers that hinder their access to mainstream services. The main conclusions of my research in relation to young Muslims are that:

“The issue of discrimination on religious grounds is effected both at the personal and institutional levels and evidenced in the personal bias/ignorance of practitioners at the face-to-face service delivery level as well as at the institutional level where institutions like colleges fail to address the needs of young Muslims. In order for young Muslims to feel a sense of belonging, mainstream public services must begin to genuinely address their different needs whether this is in terms of halal food provisions, culturally and religiously competent practitioners, making services responsive to prayer times or generally recognising the impact of religion on their day to day life” (Sallah 2007b:107).

A number of key writers in this field have lamented on the lack of a genuine Muslim voice when it comes to issues that young Muslims face (Ahmed 2009; Malik et al. 2007; Mondal 2008). In coming to the above conclusion, my research reflected the genuine and authentic voices of young Muslims; this piece of research involved 500 structured questionnaires with young Muslims, six focus groups, eight individual interviews with key mainstream stakeholders and eight individual interviews with key Muslims in the voluntary sector. This important research took the participatory action approach (Whyte 1991) and the design and implementation was carried out in collaboration with six young Muslims and another young Muslim as co-researchers. It is essential that we remind ourselves of the importance of a key tenet of Freirean pedagogy: the importance of the oppressed naming their world. In addition, the cultural/experiential affinity of the young people involved as well as the PAR approach. The major findings that led to the above conclusion include:

1. 80 out of the 500 young people interviewed in the structured interviews felt that teachers are racist to them whilst 18% felt that some teachers do not understand their needs as young Muslims.
2. Forty-nine percent of the young people surveyed raised the unavailability of halal food or the availability of only vegetarian options (sometimes bland) as a barrier to effective integration.
3. Only one out of the eight statutory organisations kept any information in relation to the young people and their faith and the research evidence suggests that most of the organisations operated from a “religions blind” service provision. Given the earlier

made point of young Muslims increasingly defining their identity on the basis of religion, it is timely to move to service provision that is more inclusive of religious identity and better targets it.

4. Thirty-one and a half percent of young people surveyed listed prayer times clashing with classes as a barrier to effective participation; however this is less so in Higher Education as there are more free periods and greater flexibility.
5. In relation to informal education, 26.5% of respondents identified the timing of informal activities like youth clubs clashing with madrassah/mosque obligations as they normally go to madrassah immediately after school. This puts a strain on the ability to do home work or take part in extra-curricular activities immediately after school.
6. Another interesting finding is that some practitioners who staff informal spaces (20%) were reported not to know enough about young Muslims' religion to effectively support them.
7. Specific examples of discrimination in seeking employment or the work place like being made to serve *haram* food were given.
8. Another significant finding of my research is young Muslims' perception of the police especially after the events of 9/11. Fifty eight point eight percent of young Muslims interviewed stated that their view of the police has changed for the worse after 7/7 and 9/11. Additionally 60.4% stated that police interaction with young Muslims after 9/11 and 7/7 has changed for the worse. Another dimension is that 173 young people felt that they were treated differently because of their religion and 179 out of the 500 because of their colour.
9. Barriers to accessing health facilities like being treated by a doctor/nurse of the opposite sex (136) and lack of halal options in the hospital (153) were identified.
10. Other relevant findings include perceived barriers to housing and to social services.

Based on the literature reviewed earlier, it can be argued that the above findings are groundbreaking. To date, it remains one of the largest and most comprehensive reviews carried out in the UK of the views of young Muslims. The strength of the research is that it

was conducted with young people and not on young people and their authentic voices can be heard in the findings. Additionally it ushered in new data in relation to barriers young Muslims perceive, which inhibit their effective participation in the field of formal and informal education, employment, the criminal justice system, housing, health and social cohesion. It additionally makes a number of key recommendations which have been published in two international publications (Sallah, 2011c; Sallah, 2007b) and presented in numerous conferences and seminars both nationally and internationally.

Gender dimension

In my writing and research, I have come across significant gender dimensions both with the Muslim community and from outside the Muslim communities. In the following quote, research participants, especially, women lamented the fact that there were a number of things they could not access because of their gender including especially accessing the mosque:

“A consistent theme running through all the focus groups is that of women not being allowed in some mosques. This was especially important for the focus group of born Muslims and that of the reverts. Respondents identified only 4 mosques out of Leicester’s 29 mosques that admitted women on their premises” (Sallah 2011b:24).

This was quite vexing especially for those who reverted to Islam recently and also those in professional occupations. In addition, in my research I have come across some communities within the Muslim population in Leicester who are less supportive of girls/women interacting in public spaces, for example going to further education or attending youth club sessions for fear of being exposed to mixed sessions where boys and girls would mixed freely. On the other hand participants have often reported some members of the general public’s view that all Muslim women are oppressed and for example forced to wear the veil. I have come across many examples of women wearing the hijab or nikab voluntarily; in fact I have come across those who wear it as a protest against perceived societal oppression and a resistance to institutions they perceived to be against them.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the limitations of the Government’s anti-terrorism strategies of PET/PREVENT, arguing that they ignore the structural causes of disaffection and do not necessarily cater for those who mobilised behind a political Muslim identity to dissent with its foreign policy. I then reviewed the diversity of Muslim identity and experiences in the UK, arguing that the Muslim community in the UK is not homogeneous as a number of

variables like nationality, ethnicity and experience of migration exist. The intersection of these variables produces a different dynamic; this needs further exploration. Nevertheless religion still remains a strong enough common denominator in shaping their identity. Next I looked at the perceptions of young Muslims and explored how they negotiate identity, as well as looking at Muslims in relation to deprivation. Finally the place of the my work around young Muslims was identified in general literature on young Muslims, and the original contribution to knowledge include 1) The size of the sample 2) The variety within the sample (Pakistani, African, Indian, Somali, Arab) 3) The fact that the research works with young people and was cognisant of PAR and the cultural affinity of the researchers (not older gatekeepers such as imams or community ‘leaders’: the very people the government ‘consults’ in PET/PREVENT) in domains inhabited by young people (mainly informal youth settings) 4) That I looked at all aspects of the experience of young Muslims (not just health, not just housing) so that the cumulative and interactive nature of the disadvantage becomes clear and the intersectionality of their lives gets highlighted. This is in addition to highlighting the perceived lack of religious competency by mainstream services in relation to young Muslims.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has consisted of a presentation of key published works and a critical overview of these works in context. The work has concerned three cognate areas each of which is vital in progressing the discipline of youth and community development in its role in supporting future youth workers to work competently in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith and increasingly globalised world. The review has considered each of three areas in turn: (1) working with young Black people, (2) developing an innovative combination of development education and generic principles of youth work pedagogy to contribute to the dynamic new sub-discipline that is Global Youth Work; and (3) working with young British Muslims.

My contribution to working with young Black people consists of delineating a model of culturally competent practice, based on an acknowledgement of different cultural conceptions of the self. It has been argued that my contribution to knowledge of for example, (Sallah 2008a; Sallah 2007a; Dacombe and Sallah 2006) consists of identifying that different cultures have Eurocentric or socio-centric conceptions of the self; that these impact on practices of bringing up children and young people; that neither cultural relativism nor cultural dogmatism can underpin culturally competent practice, which

itself is a concept that I have contributed, disseminated and applied to practice in novel ways: instead culturally competent practice is about the emotional hard-work of working in a “third zone” where the relative balances of child rights and socio-centric cultures have to be negotiated according to the specific context of the situation.

My contribution to existing knowledge in this area has been to articulate in my writing that Global Youth Work requires greater clarity and consistency among youth work educators about the nature of the undertaking, and requires specific youth-work activities and resources to help make the difficult links between local experiences of young people and the global context. The research conducted with British HEIs (Sallah 2009a) has demonstrated the strengths and areas for development in HEIs delivering youth and community work qualifications when it comes to gaining global literacy and competency.

Finally, my contribution to the development of work with young Muslims has been to confirm the diversity within Muslim communities in the UK, to contrast this to the homogeneity assumed in government responses framed within anti-terrorism rhetoric, and to note the enduring disadvantage in all main domains of social life, from education, through housing and health, to employment and criminal justice. It is the cumulative failure to create opportunities across all main domains of social life, and the failure to permit democratic spaces for dissent on foreign policy, that permits the lives of young Muslims to be experienced as if all social experiences were anti-Muslim, rather than part of the working-out of complex local and global interactions. Most importantly the research conducted was based on listening to the voices of young Muslims and cataloguing their perceptions through a participatory action research.

These three themes of race/ethnicity, religion and the process of globalisation and its impact on young people are inextricably linked together as demonstrated throughout the thesis. These themes have been explored particularly in relation to the practice of youth work. The underpinning theory of Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed has been a significant influence on my thinking and writing in supporting the process of conscientization. I have however taken this one step further by applying it to the specific context of Black and Muslim young people, mainly in the UK, and their symbiotic

relationship with the process of globalisation. Intersectionality theory has also helped me explore the interactive variables that impact on the lives of Black young people and young Muslims and how they are constructed. This is significant in that analysis and practice in relation to the largely oppressed under discussion tends to be one dimensional. My approach to research (PAR) and the dimension of cultural affinity I explored supports my writing and thinking in relation to those who work with oppressed groups. Given the contributions of the various theoretical concepts underpinning my work, it is cardinal to note that inspite of the multiple oppressions Black and Muslim young people continue to face; there is ample evidence of resistance. This is heartening, but would require a further study to document the diverse processes this entails in full. Similarly we must be cognisant of the multiple and changing identities of the population under discussion and the saliency of particular identities they construct for themselves or are constructed for them and the fluidity of this process.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that to effectively work with young people in a modern Britain, considerations of race, religion and the impact of globalisation are imperative. However, it has been demonstrated that cultural competency, religious competency and global literacy are not demonstrated by some practitioners either consciously or unconsciously in both the professional and the structural spaces they occupy; this conceptual, policy and praxis anomaly needs recalibration, not tomorrow but today, in order to address the discrimination some young people in Britain are subjected to because of their race, religion or geographical origins. My body of works presented here have been geared to this effect.

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